

# What's First

at  
**Second Presbyterian Church**  
October 2020

## Our Vision

*As members of Second Presbyterian Church,  
We gather in worship;  
We grow in God's Word;  
We serve in Jesus' name.*

### Session:

#### Moderator

Rev. Arch Wallace

#### Clerk of Session

Bettie Guthrie

#### Class of 2020

Susan Crew  
Bettie Guthrie  
Carl Guthrie  
Gloria Rose

#### Class of 2021

Karen Graham  
Lindsay Gray  
Diana Hollars  
Dorothy Riggan

#### Class of 2022

Patricia Bonham  
Joseph Chamberlain  
Dennis Harrison  
Alice Martin

### Committees:

#### Congregational Care

Dorothy Riggan

#### Building & Grounds

Carl Guthrie

#### Education

Gloria Rose

#### Finance

Karen Graham

#### Office & Personnel

Patricia Bonham

#### Witness & Service

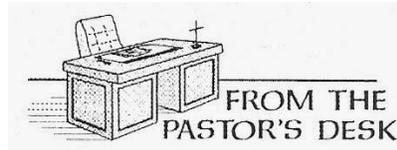
Joseph Chamberlain

#### Worship & Celebration

Alice Martin

#### Stewardship

Karen Graham



Pew Research recently published a survey it had done on the length of preacher's sermons. Pew looked at and listened to over 3800 sermons from

Evangelical churches, Mainline Catholic and Protestant churches (That's Us) and historically Black churches. The results were not surprising. The Catholics, Episcopalians and Methodists went about 14 minutes, the Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist and Christian churches about 25 minutes, the Evangelicals about 39 minutes and the historically Black churches about 54 minutes. The results follow closely the approach each church takes toward Worship.

In those churches where ritual is stressed, the homily (preaching) is not central to the service. In those where the word is stressed, a Reformationist tenet, the time should be longer. An interesting sidelight was that in the traditionally Black churches, the written sermons used were about the same length as those used in the Mainline Protestant denominations; the longer length of a sermon was attributed to the help the congregation gave in responding out loud to the sermon and the repetition of words and phrases most preachers used.

The architecture of a church follows generally the stress placed on the preaching. In churches where ritual is primary, the front of the church has an altar and the priest or ministers operate behind the altar, turning to the Cross to speak with God and turning to the congregation with the cross directly behind to speak to the people. In these traditions, the priest is the go-between between God and mankind. The altar becomes the pivotal point in the service. In Protestant churches (Us) the word is paramount, and normally the architecture reflects this by having the pulpit in the center and raised, where God's word, God speaking, is meant to be the central point of the service. Most Mainline Protestants believe in a priesthood of all believers, meaning that each of us has direct access to God, and a priest is not needed for that. That's also why our clergy are not called priests, because they are not go-betweens, but ministers, because they minister to the congregations they serve.

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK CONTINUED

What Pew also found was that the church in each group expected and accepted the length of the preaching as the norm. But, for the unchurched, lengthy sermons proved difficult. The average attention span of most churchgoers is about 20 minutes, so what happens when preachers go past that point? One Seminary Professor said preachers should preach as long as the congregation is paying attention. Another said with the 2 ½ minute sound bites national television uses for each segment of its news, all preachers ought to be considering reducing the length of their sermons.

Now for some historical info – you can read Jesus' Sermon on the Mount from start to finish in less than 20 minutes; in early America the Pilgrim's preachers went over an hour and closer to two than one; in the first church I served, I found a handwritten sermon from the preacher who was there in 1858 --- it took me 55 minutes to read it out-loud.

I write this because I am mindful of attention spans and lengths of services. I will not offer the old bromide-question: is it too much to give God an hour and five minutes a week? Instead, I encourage all to consider the Word under consideration for a particular day and to listen to hear what God might be saying to us today through it. Meanwhile, I will try to move us toward our shorter attention spans.

## THE PREACHER'S CORNER

The schedule for Worship for the month follows. You are encouraged to read the scripture before coming to Worship and to meditate upon their meaning as you consider the title of the sermon. The Reading with the asterisk will be the one emphasized in the sermon. (N.B. The pastor advises there can be changes in the scheduling, as circumstances require.)

### October

Oct. 4  
Scriptures: Exodus 20:1-4  
Matthew 21:33-46\*  
Sermon: Rejecting God

Oct. 11  
Scriptures: Genesis 17:1-11  
Colossians 2:6-15\*  
Sermon: Circumcision Revisited

Oct. 18  
Scriptures: Exodus 19:1-6  
1 Peter 2:9-10\*  
Sermon: Chosen For A Particular Task

Oct. 25  
Scriptures: John 3:1-17\*  
Romans 1:16-17  
Sermon: A Verse That Changed The World  
Session Meeting 12:15 p.m.

## WHO AM I?

I was born in Tishbe in Gilead.

I was a spokesman for God – one of God's prophets.

I am also in the New Testament where I appeared to Jesus to prepare him for his ministry and his death.

I once ran more than 50 miles in one day. I had to – I was scared and frustrated.

I defeated and ultimately slayed more than 400 priests of the cult of Baal at Mount Carmel.

I was detested by Queen Jezebel, who threatened to have me killed.

I ran again to the desert of Israel and hid, but God found me and asked, "What are you doing here?"

I taught others to follow and serve God as prophets.

I am one of the two men in the Bible who did not die. Who Am I?

**Rev. Arch Wallace**

**WITNESS AND SERVICE COMMITTEE:** Joe Chamberlain, Chair.

**2020 Peacemaking Offering**

World Communion Sunday  
October 4, 2020  
Proclaim Christ's Peace  
"Peace at all times in all ways."  
*2 Thessalonians 3:16*



On World Communion Sunday, we celebrate that Christ's peace extends throughout all creation. We celebrate that we are all together at the communion table, in God's house. We celebrate that we are offered what we need to continue the work of building the household of God, with active peacemakers here at home and around the world. Extending the peace of Christ is part of an active, engaged faith – a witness to what it means to us to be the Church, together.

The Peacemaking Offering supports a variety of peacemaking efforts: 25% is retained by congregations, 25% is used by synods and presbyteries, and 50% supports the work for peace and reconciliation being done by Presbyterians across the globe.

Please be generous in your support of the Peacemaking Offering to be received on World Communion **Sunday, October 4** and pledge to work with your congregation for peace in your community.

**CONGREGATIONAL CARE COMMITTEE:** Dorothy Riggan, Chair.

- ❖ Sick and Shut-ins - Please remember them with cards and calls.
- ❖ The Monthly Food Offering will be received on Sunday, October 4. Recipient: DCU Hope Center.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** Karen Graham, Chair.

**2020 FINANCIAL REPORT**

	DONATIONS	EXPENDITURES
August	\$ 12,443.00	\$ 15,205.75
Year to Date	\$108,329.57	\$ 91,045.37
Gain/Loss	(\$ 2,762.75)	\$ 17,284.20

**EDUCATION AND NUTURE COMMITTEE:** Gloria Rose, Chair.

All of our Sunday School leaders are ready to resume teaching as soon as the situation improves. The same rules that apply for worship will be applied to the classroom. Keep us in your prayers that we will soon be able to resume the Bible study this hour provides and plan to join us when it is safe.



**PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN:** Alice Martin, Moderator

October Circle meetings will be cancelled due to virus restrictions. Our Mission projects do go on. So please help as you are able.

**PW OCTOBER MISSION PROJECT  
OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD**



PW has joined the Witness and Service Committee for several years now working together on this project. We are hoping to fill 12 boxes this year. Listed below are items we need.

- Toothbrushes                  bars of soap                  nail clippers & files                  hair brushes
- washcloths      small games, card games, dominoes, checkers, small cars, balls, yoyo's
- school supplies - pens, rulers, scissors, med. size notebooks, markers, crayons

Please place items in the marked basket in the back hallway. These special boxes bring so much joy at Christmas time to children in need, so we are so grateful for your help again making this project a success.

Gloria Summers

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Oct. 21 by 12 noon** – “What’s First” Deadline for Nov.

**Oct. 17** – 8:30 a.m. Presbytery of the James Meeting



\*\*\*\*\*  
**NOVEMBER 1, 2020 Daylight Savings Time Ends!!!**  
 Set your clock back one-hour Saturday night, Oct. 31,  
 before you go to bed.  
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**The Sacrament of Holy Communion  
 will be celebrated on  
 Sunday, October 4, 2020.**

**Who Am I? (Answer found in the scripture)  
 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 18:15-46 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 2:1-12**

## **SESSION HIGHLIGHTS: Bettie Guthrie, Clerk of Session**

**Stated Session Meeting January 26, 2020**

**10 Cyber Meetings: February - August 2020**

**Called Session Meeting August 9; Stated Session Meeting: August 23, 2020**

Approved the minutes of the Stated Session Meeting January 26, Cyber Meetings: February 11, March 6, March 27, April 8, April 29, May 1, May 23, May 29, July 20, August 3, 2020, Called Session Meeting August 9, 2020.

January, February, March, April, May, June and July Treasurer's reports were received.

Approved without exception:

- ✓ the request from Virginia Goodrich be dismissed from the Active Membership Roll. Virginia has joined Blandford United Methodist Church.
- ✓ the Treasurer, Susan Crew for a term of one year.
- ✓ the 2019 Church Statistical Report by Clerk of Session.
- ✓ the 2020 Sessional Committee Chairmen for a term of one year; Building and Grounds – C. Guthrie, Congregational Care – D. Riggan, Education – G. Rose, Finance – K. Graham and S. Crew, Office and Personnel – P. Bonham, Worship and Celebration – A. Martin.
- ✓ the 2020 Building and Grounds Committee members (due to space limitations please contact the church office for the names)
- ✓ the use of McIlwaine Hall on Sunday, June 14, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. for the annual Gospel Heritage group.
- ✓ the 2020 Congregational Care Committee members (contact the church office for names)
- ✓ the 2020 Education and Nurture Committee members (contact church office for names)
- ✓ to re-establish a maximum spending limit for committee chairmen, to be increased from \$300 to \$500 with the exception of Building and Grounds. Any amount over \$500 will need Session approval.
- ✓ to apply \$2,045 from the Memorial Restricted Funds to the Chairlift/Elevator Fund.
- ✓ to purchase emergency medical equipment at a cost of \$2,500 (amount was approved by Session at the August 25, 2019 meeting). Cost of the equipment was raised from donations from the Memorial Gift families.
- ✓ the 2020 Office and Personnel Committee members (contact church office for names.)
- ✓ the 2019 Statistical Report sent to POJ. (copy available in church office)
- ✓ Elder Susan Crew as Commissioner to the POJ meeting February 15, 2020.
- ✓ the amended Sexual Misconduct Policy of Second Presbyterian Church to incorporate by reference the Sexual Misconduct/Harassment Policy of the POJ as approved June 14, 2016 with revision approved October 19, 2019 that will require mandatory training. (copy available in church office)

Cyber Meetings:

- ✓ February 11, 2020; approved without exception a request from Elder Gloria Rose to purchase AED equipment, \$1,350, to be used during emergencies.
- ✓ March 6, 2020; approved without exception the request from Mary Tucker to use the Sanctuary and McIlwaine Hall for the funeral of our former Sexton, Moses Tucker.
- ✓ March 27, 2020; approved without exception to extend the cancellation of church services until May 1 due to COVID-19 pandemic.

## **SESSION HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED**

- ✓ April 8, 2020; approved without exception the request from the Finance Committee application for the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) for a loan through the Paycheck Protection Program.
- ✓ April 29, 2020; approved without exception the request from Building and Grounds to resurface and stripping of the parking lot at a cost of \$5,143.00.
- ✓ May 1, 2020; approved without exception the request from the Clerk of Session to extend the cancellation of church services until June 1, 2020 following CDC and the governor's guidelines of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✓ May 23, 2020; approved without exception to elect Elder Bettie Guthrie as Commissioner for the 105<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the POJ on June 16, 2020 to be held virtually.
- ✓ May 29, 2020; approved without exception Rev. Wallace's request to reopen church services beginning June 7, 2020 following Presbytery, CDC, and the governor's guidelines of the COVID-19 pandemic guidelines.
- ✓ July 20, 2020; approved without exception the Clerk of Session's request for Elder Lindsay Gray as Commissioner for the 106<sup>th</sup> Stated meeting of the POJ, October 17, 2020 at Orange Presbyterian Church.
- ✓ August 3, 2020; approved without exception the request from Building and Grounds to purchase an air conditioner for the Scout Hut \$500 (funds to be taken from leftover insurance monies), Ice Maker \$1,100 for McIlwaine Hall kitchen (found DOA on Sunday) funds from 7-B Building and Grounds Maintenance line item.

Called Session Meeting August 9, 2020; approved without exception the request from POJ Dismantling Racism Ministry and POJ Communication and Coordination Team to respectfully decline to endorse the Statement Against Racism. Clerk of Session sent a letter on behalf of session with our decision. (copy available in church office)

Stated Session Meeting August 23, 2020, approved:

- ✓ without exception the request from Virginia Goodrich to be dismissed from the church rolls. Ms. Goodrich has moved her membership to Blandford United Methodist Church.
- ✓ without exception Building and Grounds 2020 Committee members. (copy of names available in the church office.
- ✓ motion from Building and Grounds that no outside organizations use the church facilities until Session has determined and approved an official reopening date.
- ✓ Building and Grounds motion request from Elder Ricky Tucker to use McIlwaine Hall for their Tuesday Gospel Inheritance Group rehearsal when Session has determined and approved an official reopening date.
- ✓ Building and Grounds motion request from Clarence Page (CP) to allow AA Group to use McIlwaine Hall for the four day a week meetings when Session has determined and approved an official reopening date.
- ✓ Building and Grounds motion to approve payment of invoice from Lewis and Hitchcock, Inc. for organ work. Transfer funds from the restricted Organ Fund line-item for payment.
- ✓ Education and Nurture motion for the members of the 2020 Education Committee. (copy of names available in the church office)
- ✓ Education and Nurture motion to coordinate a luncheon with the Men's Group for the purpose of an "information briefing on the new Emergency Equipment." Due to COVID-19 date to be determined.

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

- ✓ Worship and Celebration committee members. (copy of names available in the church office.)
- ✓ motion from Clerk of Session to write a letter to POJ requesting a waiver for Second Church, Petersburg for the lack of “quarterly session meetings as required in the Book of Order G-3.0203.”
- ✓ a request from Rev. Wallace that a waiver of tenure for Elders Bettie and Carl Guthrie to permit one or more to be reelected because of the nature of their jobs – Building and Grounds and Clerk of Session.
- ✓ request from Rev. Wallace for the chairmen of the following committees: Nominating Committee co-chairmen Elder Diana Hollars and Elder Bettie Guthrie. Stewardship chairman – Elder Karen Graham. Witness and Service chairman – Elder Joe Chamberlain.

## October Birthday

2 Susan Andrews  
3 Joseph Chamberlain  
Cheryl Smith  
6 Denise Hargrave  
Matthew Pittman  
10 Thelma Kirkland  
11 Cynthia Smith  
12 Martha Epes Johnson



17 Becky Lancaster  
18 Keith Snavelly  
24 Virginia Rowe  
25 Venable Johnson, Jr.  
27 Anne Webb Fenessy  
29 Dale Pittman  
30 Miles Gregory Kropp  
31 Gena Wallace

## BIRTH

Congratulations to Andrew and Christina Graham upon the birth of their son, Maddox Andrew Graham, born on August 26, 2020. Grandparents are Karen and Willie Graham.

## SYMPATHY

Our Christian sympathy is extended to the family of Karen Wright upon the death of her mother, Lila Bradford, on September 7, 2020 and to the family of Gloria Rose upon the death of her husband, Bill Rose, on September 18, 2020.

## THANK YOU

Dear Friends at Second Church,  
Mike and I would like to thank all of our church family for your prayers, cards, and support during the illness and passing of both my sister and my mother. I know they are with our Lord, and that is a great comfort.  
Karen Wright

Second Presbyterian Church  
419 West Washington Street  
Petersburg, Virginia 23803

Address Service Requested

