



PresbyPress

"Everyday...is the day the Lord has made— Rejoice! and be glad in it!"

May, 2021



Dear Friends and Members of First Presbyterian Church,

I pray that you are enjoying the good weather and the ability to get outside again. We have had what I like to call, "a year of COVID winter." Now that many of us are vaccinated and the weather has improved, it feels like we can breathe again, and get out of the house! I have been praying especially for those of you who live alone. This has been a very isolating time, and I hope that you will get out of your homes and begin to socialize again. God created us humans to be communal, and isolation can be devastating to our mental health. In Genesis, it says that God created a man and then said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." Please be sure to take care of yourselves by getting out and seeing your friends and loved ones. You will feel better when you do. If you're vaccinated, you are fairly safe. If you are not, sit in lawn chairs in your friends' and family's yards.

UPDATE on Resuming In-Person Worship:

Worship Committee will recommend to the session that we open the church for **in-person worship services on June 6.** This still needs to be approved by the session. Look for more information in the future.

Blessings, *Pastor Sharon*



Conversation with Rock Lake about “Sharing Sharon.”

I just want to confirm that we are progressing fairly quickly with the process of sharing the pastor with Rock Lake. The joint subcommittee’s projected plan is:



May 10 – Subcommittee meets with Sharon to finalize the drafted terms.

May 13 and 18 – At their regularly scheduled separate session meetings, the sessions will consider and approve the terms of the agreements.

May 25 – The Presbytery of West Virginia’s Committee on Ministry will review and approve the agreements.

June – Our congregation will call a congregational meeting to approve changing Sharon’s “Terms of Call,” to half time.

July – The sharing of the pastor will begin.

A “Heads up” for you about worship: Since both churches can’t worship at 11:00 am, neither church is taking that time slot. Rock Lake worship will be at 9:30am, and First Presby worship will be at 11:30am. We all know that it is difficult for congregations to change worship times. Please respect the fact that our joint subcommittee has graciously worked together to agree on this plan. This schedule will allow for a gap time for Sharon to get from/to each church and consult with worship participants.

Pastor Sharon

Congratulations to our 2021 Senior High Graduate



Jessica Martin is graduating from the Lighthouse of Learning Academy. She has a GPA of 3.69 on a 4.0 scale and has taken extra classes over the past two summers to accomplish her goal of graduating a year early. Jessica has been Student Council President for the past two years. She has been accepted to the College of Science at Marshall University, where she is planning to be a Biology Major – with an emphasis on Forensic Science.

Jessica is the daughter of Lisa Martin Melton and the granddaughter of John & Sandy Melton.

Jessica, Congratulations and Best Wishes!

From the Clerk of Session

Hello, First Presbyterian members and friends. Here are some items I thought would interest you:

1. The session continues to meet via Zoom. We are looking forward to the time when we can meet in person.
2. Two committees – one from First Presby and one from Rock Lake- continue to meet regarding joint mission between the two churches. Our members are Bob Lilly, Tom Titus, and Cheryl Eary. Issues the committee is considering are Pastor Gearing's terms of call, her office hours, and timing of the sermons.
3. Each month the session takes up the issue of opening the church for services. This past month, the consensus was that we – as a country and as a church – are tantalizingly close to a return to normalcy. Because we have an aging congregation and because we wanted to err on the side of caution, we elected not to reopen the church completely. The issue will be considered again at the May session meeting.
4. The Missions and Education committees are moving forward with plans for summer activities for youth and adults alike.
5. The Live Stream Team has done a fantastic job of
 - Streaming the service via the church website, Facebook, and Youtube
 - Obtaining grants and donations to pay for over \$10,000 of equipment to make the online services enjoyable to the congregation
 - Working long and tiring hours to learn how to use the new equipment
 - We extend a huge thank you to Cheryl Eary, Sara Boland, Lisa Woo, Tina Amburgey Dorsey, as well as Pastor Gearing for their efforts.

Thanks to all the elders and to Sharon for keeping the church going in these unusual times. The session looks forward to seeing you in the sanctuary in the near future.

Joe Fuller, Clerk of the Session



A Shared Experience

What comes to mind when you hear the word *Pentecost*? Many people think of mighty wind, tongues of fire and multiple languages. But Acts 2 begins with another detail that's just as key: Jesus' disciples "were all together in one place." Because they were together physically and spiritually, the early believers didn't miss the life-changing, world-changing birth of the Church.

The pandemic, while changing our definition of gathering, also highlighted our need for interaction. If Jesus' first followers hadn't been assembled on Pentecost, they would've missed the outpouring of God's power and the indescribable joy God had for them. Think about what believers today might miss if we neglect to worship with other friends of Christ. Who would want to miss God's blessings, promises and joy?

Day of Pentecost



On the Day of Pentecost, we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit descending in a mighty rush of wind and flame to inspire the church's proclamation of Christ's rising and to empower its mission and ministry to the world. (See Acts 2:1-13; see also Joel 2:28-32.)

The notion of Easter as a season of 50 days ending at Pentecost is patterned after the ancient Jewish festival of seven weeks that extended from the beginning of the barley harvest (on the second day after the beginning of Passover) to the end of the wheat harvest at the Festival of Weeks or *Shavuot* (see Deuteronomy 16:9-12). The Festival of Weeks later came to be called Pentecost ("50th day") by Greek speaking Jews. In Jewish tradition, Shavuot also marks the giving of the law to Moses at Sinai; this liturgical link may inform Paul's discussions of the law and the Spirit (see Romans 8, 2 Corinthians 3 and Galatians 3).

Pentecost is new creation

An excerpt from the Companion to the Book of Common Worship (Geneva Press, 2003, 117-119):

According to the Day of Pentecost story in Acts 2:1-13, God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower witnesses to the resurrection. Sounds from heaven, cosmic language, the rush of a mighty *ruach* (wind, spirit, breath) invaded the house in which the apostles gathered, and appeared to them as a burning fire. Tongues of fire touched their nerve centers. A power — the unseen power of God — moved among them and gripped them. The Holy Spirit is unseen, like the wind, which is why the Old Testament calls it *ruach YHWH*, "the wind, or breath, of God" (cf. John 3:8). The Spirit is the "unseenness of God" working among us.

According to Joel (2:28-29) the *ruach* is to open everybody to God's future. People young and old will dream and will have visions of hope; they will be able to loosen themselves from the way things are now, because God is establishing a whole new economy of creation. The Holy Spirit breaks us out of our preoccupation with ourselves and frees us to serve neighbors, loosens our grasp on possessions, and sets us to loving people. New creation is what Joel is talking about. Pentecost is new creation.

The book of Acts tells the story of the outcome of Pentecost's new creation: people witness in word and in deed to the risen Christ. At the outset, the newborn church immediately tumbled out into the streets to witness to God's mighty works in the languages of people all over the world. By the end of the story, a tiny, Spirit-filled community of faith that broke from its present order has spread across the continents with incredible power to bring new things into being. With the gift of the Spirit, all things are possible.

Therefore, on the Day of Pentecost, we celebrate God's gift of Holy Spirit which draws us together as one people, helps us to comprehend what God is doing in the world, and empowers us to proclaim, in word and in deed, God's plan of reconciling all people in the name of Christ (Ephesians 1:10).

Without the gift of the Spirit, Christ's church dries up and withers away, and we are left with only our broken selves. With the gift of the Spirit, all things are possible. A spirit-filled community of faith opens eyes to needs in the world and sees its missing as God's new people. The Day of Pentecost is the climax of the Great Fifty Days of Easter, celebrating as it does the gift of the Spirit to the body of Christ — the church.

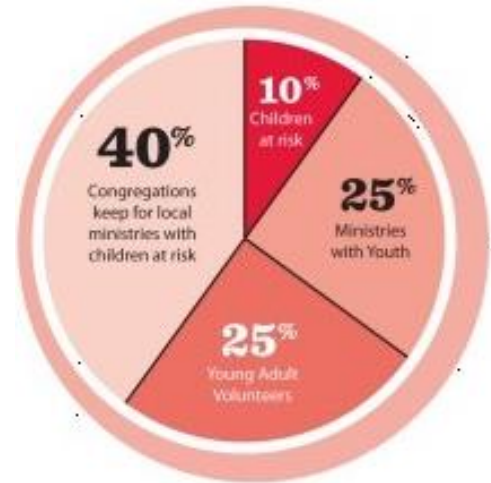


SPECIAL OFFERINGS PENTECOST

PENTECOST SUNDAY, MAY 23, 2021

How is my gift used?

A gift to the Pentecost Offering helps the church encourage, develop, and support its young people, and also address the needs of at-risk children. 40% of the Pentecost offering can be retained by individual congregations wanting to make an impact in the lives of young people within their own community. The remaining 60% is used to support ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Give at <http://specialofferings.pcusa.org/pentecost>.



The Pentecost Offering as Revenue Sharing

This offering is appropriately received at Pentecost, just as the church is remembering the coming of the Holy Spirit with its wondrous animating activity in the life of the church. The children and youth who benefit from these gifts are themselves an animating presence in the church of today, whether members of Sunday schools or neighborhood children who receive hospitality and homework assistance.

The Pentecost Offering should be an integral part of every congregation's participation in the Educate A Child Initiative, since through this Special Offering:

- Each church serves the larger ministry of the PC(USA) by enabling programs for **children at risk** and supporting **Young Adult Volunteers** and **Ministries with Youth**, which includes Youth Triennium.
- Each church expresses its goodwill for children beyond its own neighborhood by joining a portion of its treasure along with others in a coherent Presbyterian voice for children.
- **Each church retains 40% of the offering**, which can serve as start-up funds for an Educate the Child program or sustaining funds for ongoing ministry.

The Pentecost offering is a Christian discipline of stewardship in which, through revenue sharing, the whole church witnesses to Jesus' injunction that "whoever welcomes one of these little ones, welcomes me." It just makes sense – dollars and cents!

To learn more about the Pentecost Offering, go to <http://specialofferings.pcusa.org/pentecost>.

Bluestone Camp & Retreat Presents

FAMILY & VENTURE CAMP 2021

DATES

June 15-20
June 22-27
June 29 - July 4
July 6-11

PRICING

Venture Camp: **\$250**
per person for the week
Family Camp: **\$250 per**
person for the week or
\$60 per person a day.

*campers 9 & under half price
2 & under are free
minimum 2 nights stay

QUESTIONS? CONTACT

sarah@
bluestonecamp.org
304-397-5050

*Registration opens
March 1st



WHAT IS VENTURE CAMP?

Venture Camp, also known as "The Hogan Experience" is rustic living in a remote structure away from the main campus. A Bluestone Hogan is an open-air frame structure with canvas tarps covering all windows and doors.

Venture Camp is for rising 9th graders through Seniors

FAMILY & VENTURE CAMP

WHAT IS FAMILY CAMP?

Family Camp is cabin based camping. Family is not restricted to nuclear family, but anyone in your bubble. This can be a couple, cousins, a youth leader and youth group, or a group of friends. Activities will be similar to traditional camp, but will be done in your group.

Maximum of 8 people per group

Guided Hike
Swimming
Creek Walk
ACTIVITIES
Vespers
Bible Study
Story Night
Crafts



Memorial Day

BY ANNETTE WYNNE

Is it enough to think today
Of all our brave, then put away
The thought until a year has sped?
Is this full honor for our dead?

Is it enough to sing a song
And deck a grave; and all year long
Forget the brave who died that we
Might keep our great land proud and free?

Full service needs a greater toll,
That we who live give heart and soul
To keep the land they died to save,
And be ourselves, in turn, the brave!



Christian Symbol



THREE INTERWOVEN CIRCLES

Each circle in this symbol represents one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The circles, having no beginning and no end, signify the Trinity's eternal nature. The circles' interlacing symbolizes unity. In the center is a triangle, an ancient symbol of the Trinity.



May 4	Amy Bennett
May 23	Custer Holliday
May 24	Linda Amburgey
May 25	Becky Kimmons
	Becky Nelson
May 26	Jean Sibold
May 27	Brad Snyder

Volunteers Needed!!

Your Furniture Mission is once again working with Heart & Hand to organize pickups for this summer. Other participating churches are: Grace Nazarene, First Nazarene, Blessed Sacrament, First Baptist, and First United Methodist.

We need labor and drivers for Saturdays. One does not need to be a member of First Presby (or any church) to participate. Women are encouraged to volunteer. We are open to paying a small amount, if you know anyone interested. This is a last resort if we are unable to find enough volunteers.

Should you or anyone you know be interested, please let me know. We are slowly organizing with anticipation of starting in late May. My cell number is 304-206-5930.

Your assistance is appreciated, Tom Titus








Worth Celebrating!

While going through the so-called “daily grind,” it’s fun to anticipate special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries and holiday meals — especially when other people cook and clean up! Although *every* day is full of countless reasons to rejoice, we may not always feel like celebrating. Life’s concerns pile high, distracting us from gratitude, joy and intentional acknowledgment of our blessings.

When you need a reason to smile and celebrate, head to www.NationalDayCalendar.com. Almost every food item and hobby now has its own day, and you’ll even find gems such as National Be Late for Something Day (September 5, if you want to plan ahead!).

These fun “occasions” can help you embrace small joys and may even inspire you to celebrate them with family or friends. As you do, consider what it is about today and each gift from God that makes this day special.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
 Mother's Day 9 9:30 Sunday School Conference Call 11:00 Livestream Worship 7:00 Al-Anon	10 10:30 Staff Meeting 2:30 Sharing Sharon Committee Mtg.	11	12	13 6:00 Session Meeting	14	15 9:45 WV Gold Star Mothers Meeting (Mizpah Rm.)
16 9:30 Sunday School Conference Call 11:00 Livestream Worship 7:00 Al-Anon	17	18	19	20 Presbytery Meeting Enslow Park Presbyterian Church Huntington	21	22
 Pentecost 23 9:30 Sunday School Conference Call 11:00 Livestream Worship 7:00 Al-Anon	24	25	26	27	28	29
 Trinity Sunday 30 9:30 Sunday School Conference Call 11:00 Livestream Worship 7:00 Al-Anon	Memorial Day! 31  (Church Office Closed)					