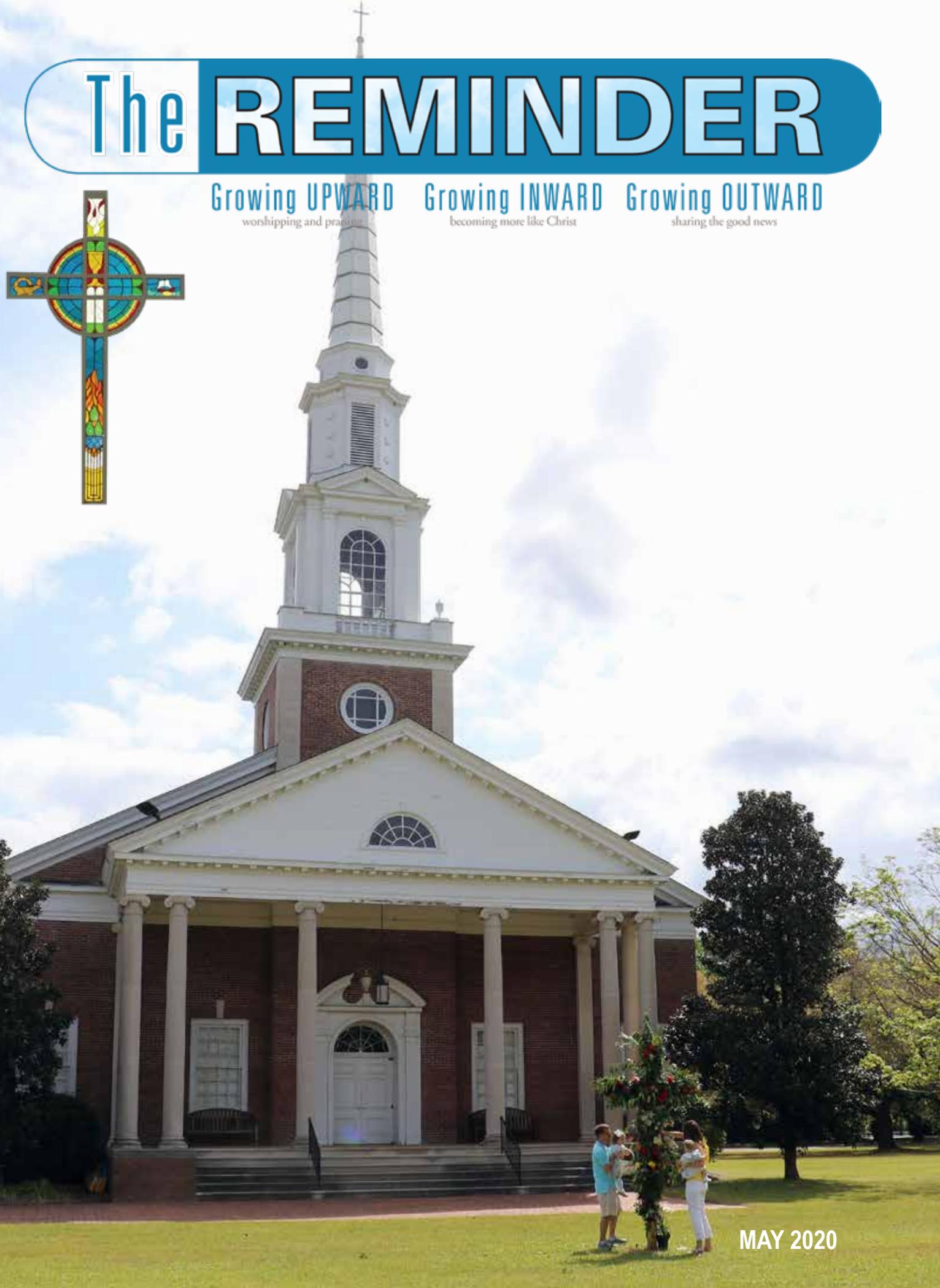


The REMINDER

Growing UPWARD
worshipping and praising

Growing INWARD
becoming more like Christ

Growing OUTWARD
sharing the good news



MAY 2020

What Does it All Mean?

Dear friends,

You know that we are in a peculiar time in life when Presbyterians can't plan! And that is by and large where we are now. As I was studying and planning sermons the other day, I made it to about the end of the summer when I realized: I think it would be counter-productive to try to plan more, because we just can't guess what adjustments we will have to make as we go.

One of the most common questions I hear now during this virus is the quest for meaning: "What are we supposed to learn during this time? Can we hurry up and learn it, so that we can move on?" The main thoughts along these lines that come to my mind (which cannot be quickly digested) are these:

- God is in charge. God really does work in "all things" for our good.
- What we want and what our souls might need are often two very different things.
- My sense, and hope, is that a deeper sense of purpose, intention-

ality, and hunger for the Lord will be with us in a lasting way.

As I listen to the weekly testimonies from our covenant partners, they are describing how God has touched them. Many times it is a "waking up" or inner change that has a touch of mystery wrapped up in it. My prayer is that this time of the virus will be for many a time of deepening, reevaluating, waking up, change-making. Depending on your situation, the suffering may really have your attention. We have been trained to avoid suffering, and we are shocked to read "it has been granted to you not only to believe in Christ, but to suffer for him" (Philippians 1:29). It makes you wonder.

I am also wondering, if we are intentional with the Lord, that some genuine mentoring relationships will emerge. God will place people on our hearts who we are to reach out to. I think of discipleship as not simply following the Lord, but growing in Him. So sanctification is not far from discipleship. A program, list or survey does not go very far; intentionality, hunger,

My prayer is that this time of the virus will be for many a time of deepening, reevaluating, waking up, change-making.

and relationships in which over time a trusted someone(s) else can truly know you and speak into your life from the position of a mature believer who wants the very best for you – that can be life-changing. That is a mentoring relationship. That will change your life. And if that is what bubbles up out of this viral season, the meaning of this season will be very clear indeed.

Peace,



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ON THE COVER

Ashton and John Pennstrom along with their children Anna Lee and Ella Kate add flowers to the cross on the front lawn of the church. Families decorated the cross throughout the day. For more pictures, visit page 11.

A Thought or Two Challenging You Toward Discipleship

Making the most of technology

One of the new adventures that we are on during this virus season is Sunday School online. It was delightful to hear how classes began meeting online on the second Sunday of “no gathered worship.” Just think, if you are not currently in a Sunday School class, you might consider joining one!

If you are interested, you may contact a host and ask to receive the invitation/link to join the class. The Women’s Only class taught by Patti Hubbs is being hosted by Linda Smiley on her Zoom account. Brandon Hylton is hosting the Grace and Truth class taught by Jim Dameron and Robert Moore. Steve Grady is hosting and teaching the Price class with Dudley Saleeby. Johnny Stoupenos is hosting the Door class (formerly Pilgrim) taught by Cary Andrews and Munford Scott. Jack Hofler is hosting and teaching with Everett McMillan the Veritas class. And the Journey (taught by Chris Canfield) and Discovery (taught by me) classes are meeting on the church Zoom account in breakout rooms.

Jack Hofler shared this about their Zoom Sunday school, “The Veritas class has enjoyed holding Sunday school via Zoom conference for the past few weeks. It is amazing to see how God can use technology to help his people continue to enjoy fellowship and the study of Scripture. We have just started a new study of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and we are determined to not let the challenge of our physical separation



Many of our Sunday School classes are meeting on Zoom. Reach out if you'd like to join us online for a study.

deter us from the community we share.”

It is possible for those without a computer or cell phone to call in from a landline. Each invitation has instructions about how to type in the meeting ID and the password from your landline. So everyone in a class could participate.

I was talking to a friend this week and she was recommending that it could be a great time to invite folks that are not part of church to join a class online. They would be able to get a taste of our fellowship and not even need to say a word or be seen for that matter.

I would also like to extend the invitation to other groups to use zoom.

If you would like to meet on the church Zoom account, please ask. I can set up a meeting for you and your group. Certainly we would have to make sure that no other groups were meeting. We already have three women’s prayer groups and one men’s small group meeting during the week.

These are challenging times for everyone. But even still we need to continue to build the body in a time of social distancing. Let us learn new tricks to make it possible. Ephesians 5:20 says that a life lived in the Spirit involves “Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” That’s our challenge as his disciples!

Chris

Generosity of the church

COVID-19 Financial Update

Thankfully due to the generosity of our covenant partners the current financial condition of the church is sound in spite of the economic impact of COVID-19. We have heard of churches in our area that have seen their weekly offerings reduced as much as 90%. Last month I shared a quote from Rev. Dr. Dana Allin, ECO's Synod Executive regarding a survey done of 1,600 senior pastors stating that "40% of their churches had *immediate* financial worries resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Another 40% of pastors indicated that they anticipate financial challenges soon." While our current situation is sound, if we are honest with ourselves, we probably fall into the second 40% that "anticipate financial challenges." To do everything proposed in our Ministry Action Plan, our weekly need is \$32,908. For April our average weekly receipts were \$31,979 or about 97% of our average weekly need. This is a tremendous blessing and testament to the faithfulness of our covenant partners even during this time of uncertainty. As we continue to move through this time when we are the "church scattered" let me encourage all covenant partners to continue to give as you normally would (on-line, mail, ACH, etc.)

REALM Log-in to REALM and tap the "Giving" icon then follow the instructions to make a one-time donation or set up a recurring gift.

Bill Pay - If you use online banking, you can set up an automated payment to First Presbyterian Church.

Bank Draft - You can instruct your bank or financial institution to set



up a bank draft to First Presbyterian Church.

Online - Visit our website www.florencefirst.org and click "Online Giving" at the top of the home page and follow the instructions.

Text Giving - Simply text **florencefirst** to **73256** and you will receive instructions on how to give using a credit/debit card, checking or savings account.

Mail - Our mailing address is: First Presbyterian Church, 700 Park Ave., Florence, SC 29501. We *even* have a mail slot in the door to the administration area where you can drop off your tithes and offerings! Please feel free to contact me if you have questions about any of these giving options. As always, we are thankful for your continued financial support of the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church.

UPCOMING PROJECTS

While our regular weekly rhythm has been disturbed, we will be moving forward with some projects that have been in the planning stages for quite some time. First, site preparation work has begun for

our **Columbarium and Memory Garden**. We are hopeful that the construction and landscaping will be completed in late May or mid-June. The actual dates for completion is contingent weather and any restrictions related to the COVID pandemic. If you are interested in reserving a niche, please contact George Beshere, Glenn Bell or me. We'll be glad to assist you with making the necessary arrangements.

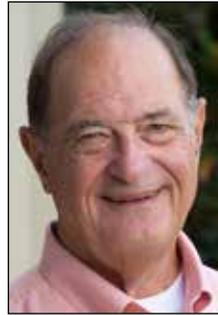
Second, plans are in place for refurbishing the foyer of the **Christian Life Center** (paint and flooring) and replacing the carpet in the gym in early June. Our Christian Life Center was built in the mid-1990s and the carpet is original. To say that we've gotten our money's worth is an understatement. For the past several years, the church has set aside money each month for capital improvement and replacement projects. Funding for the CLC refurbishment will come out of those funds.

Living with Lament

Living with lament means living with God. Paul in Philippians 1:29-30 says: “for it has been granted to you for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict which you saw and now hear to be mine.”

We as the church are willing to receive the joy of the Lord and the Christ with gratitude. Paul seems to be saying suffering for the sake of Christ is a common experience. Paul suffered as he witnessed to the Gospel and struggled to expose the false gospel of his theological opponents. I believe God suffered with Christ on the cross. We might say God lamented (was sorrowful) for the torture and death of His Son, Jesus, on the cross. N.T. Wright defines lament as: “what happens when people ask why? And don’t get an answer.” I don’t claim to have a theological answer to the coronavirus pandemic, but I do believe God suffers with every victim.

Artur Weiser in the Psalms identifies lament in the Psalms as “the psalm type which numerically occurs most frequently in the Psalter.” He divides the lament into community laments and personal laments. I believe Jesus repeats the laments in the Psalms when he is dying on the cross. Matthew 26:46 and Mark 15:34 quote the words of Jesus from the cross: “my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” This is the opening of Psalm 22. Luke 23:46 quotes Jesus’ last human words as: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” These words occur in Psalm 31:5. There are five laments between Psalm 22 and Psalm 31 (22, 25, 26, 27, and 31). Could it be that Jesus repeated these



REV. MIKE FLEENOR’S BLOG

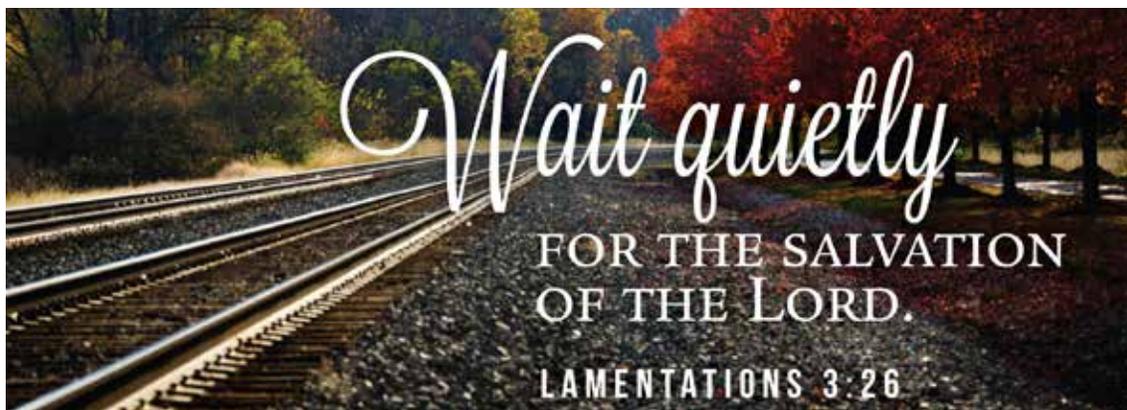
<https://onepastorsponderings.wordpress.com/>

Psalms as he died to be faithful to his Father, our Lord and God?

The crisis in our world and the personal crises we face daily as disease and illness cannot be explained nor eliminated from living. God is with us in the Spirit of Jesus. This is our faith and the reason we seek to witness to those who do not believe Jesus can deliver us from death and sin. We are called to love and to express thanksgiving to all those who serve us during this time. Our faith in God calls us to be grateful for God living in us and walking with us.

Thomas Rinkart was a German pastor and musician who served the Church in 1637 in Eilenburg, Germany. In that year, 8,000 people died in that city of disease, including Rinkart’s wife. He preached at 200 burial services in one week. Rinkart wrote a hymn-text during this plague which is familiar to us. “Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices. Who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices.”

God is with us as we pray and as we take responsibility to do what we can to help our world during these days.





From left: Frances Welch, Carol Fleenor, Melba Whitesides and Betsy Olsen work in their homes creating protective face masks for the congregation. What started out as a discussion before a prayer group turned into a ministry as several women sought to help those in need.

A stitch and a prayer

What started as a discussion before the Thursday morning prayer group in early April, a group of women created a ministry to help provide the face masks.

“Melba Whitesides, Frances Welch and I felt there was a need in our church family since there was a push for people to wear masks in public,” said Genia Tyson.

“Melba and I then recruited Betsy Olsen and Linda Smiley from our weekly Bible Study to join us. Very soon afterward Carol Fleenor and Donna Grubb joined us.

“To date we have made approximately 200 masks. The majority have gone to our church family with others to our relatives and neighbors. Linda has also contributed over 25 to the Presbyterian Community. Numerous individuals in the church have donated elastic, bias tape, ribbon and even fabric. To these members we say, ‘Thank you!’ We are willing and able to continue our sewing as long as there is a need and we have supplies.”



Genia Tyson works on face masks at her home.

¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

James 1:17

*O sing to the Lord a new song,
for He has done marvelous things.*

Psalm 98:1



*With gratitude in your hearts, sing psalms, hymns,
and spiritual songs to God.*

*And whatever you do, in word or deed,
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

Colossians 3:16

Atypical year leads to WiM postponements

April is typically a very exciting month for the Women In Ministry, wrapping up our year with our annual salad dinner and Spring Celebration. But this has not been a typical year. The outbreak of COVID 19 has invaded all our lives, and we all have struggled to get through these past couple of months. Some of us may know someone who has had the virus. Some of us may have lost our jobs. Some of us have become school teachers as well as moms. And we all have missed seeing each other. What a strange time this has been.

Our Spring Celebration featuring Wendy Blight was canceled. Jayne Boswell, our Co-Moderator, hopes to arrange a gathering again with Wendy sometime in the future. We will also postpone the announcement of our Life Service Award Recipient until we can meet again. We will keep you posted.

The Coordinating Team will not gather to meet once again in May due to the virus. Although some restrictions were lifted by the Governor of SC, social distanc-

ing behaviors are still highly recommended. And so, to further protect each other, it is recommended that the circles do not physically meet in May.

The Coordinating Team and the Circle Chairs will continue to communicate through email. Hopefully, the summer months will bring some relief to this health crisis and we can come back together again in the fall. Please continue to keep our health care workers and our vulnerable populations in your prayers and thoughts as you contemplate how you interact with others in the coming days and weeks. And please also remember those in our midst who have suffered through job losses or the disease itself. The crisis is not over yet, but hopefully we will soon be on the mend.

¹⁰ So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10 (New International Version)

Donna Grubb, WIM Moderator.



CDC staff looking forward to normalcy

The Child Development Center at First Presbyterian re-opened for our enrolled children whose parents are first-responders and medical staff on Monday, March 30. Most of our CDC Staff have worked part-time for the past six weeks caring for the children. Although we have enjoyed this time, the staff are especially looking forward to the day when all of the children are back at the center and we are in our normal routine.

Although it is hard for young children to practice “social distancing,” we are doing our best at the center to space the children at mealtime and naptime. We are also doing extra cleaning of the most frequently hard surfaces and toys and encouraging more handwashing for children and staff. We have changed our morning check in, with parents dropping the children off in the tower area. Each child and staff member has their temperature taken before entering the center and parents and staff sign off that no one in their home is ill. At the end of the day the parents return to the tower area to pick up their child.

It is our hope that by not allowing so many adults into the center classrooms that we are helping to cut down on transferring germs. Although this is different for all of us the parents and staff are being careful and cooperating nicely. We are hoping to re-open for all of our enrolled children as soon as the medical community and our Advisory Committee feel that is a wise option. We are missing all of our



Child Development Center families and hope to be back together soon! Thank you for your encouragement and prayers for us! It is always a blessing to serve here among you.

Beth



MAY Birthdays

MAY 1

Wanda Hill

MAY 2

Amy Dozier

MAY 3

Sarah Elizabeth Rainwater

MAY 4

Noha Cotran
Melanie DuBose
Cissy Hicks
Gwen Misurella

MAY 5

Ann Rodgers Chandler
Patti Vassy

MAY 6

Ellen Pearson

MAY 7

Barbara Meeks

MAY 8

Mac Burch
Betsy Eaddy
Carolyn Pearce
Peete Smiley

MAY 9

Camp Blanton
Jennifer Foxworth
Christi Gasque
Anne Hanna
Hayes Hofler
Liam Hughes

MAY 10

Libby Fuller
Lee Gandy
Luke Prince
Ella Warner
Lilly Williams

MAY 11

Caroline Babb
Carter Brand
Kimberly Brauss
Melaine Campbell
Barbara Montgomery

MAY 12

Robin Halus

MAY 14

Breck Granger
Thomas Rogers

MAY 15

Stephanie Spivey

MAY 16

Elizabeth Anne Hanna

MAY 17

Emma Blanton
Allison Johnson

MAY 19

Meredith Dozier
Donna Grubb
Jack Hofler

MAY 21

Sasha Hall
Donald Heath
Andy Jeffords

MAY 22

Mary Lynn van Witzenburg

MAY 24

Carol Banner

MAY 25

Hank Moree
Sonny Slaughter
Lynn Porter
Austin Tyler
Ruth Bertram

MAY 26

Jim Frederick
Jim Poston
Ben Green
Zip Vassy

MAY 27

Madison Sprenger
Richmond Wilhoit

MAY 28

Graham Emerson
Masters Emerson

MAY 30

Henry Fast
Tomi Jean Cleveland
Danielle Guinn
Hunter Scott

MAY 31

James Johnson
Erin Lewis



May



SUNDAY, MAY 3

10:00 AM Online Worship Service
6:00 PM Youth Zoom meeting

MONDAY, MAY 4

6:30 PM GriefShare Zoom meeting

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

4:00 PM Youth Zoom meeting
5:00 PM Youth Zoom meeting

THURSDAY, MAY 7

10:30 AM Prayer Group Zoom meeting



SUNDAY, MAY 10 MOTHER'S DAY

10:00 AM Online Worship Service
6:00 PM Youth Zoom meeting

MONDAY, MAY 11

6:30 PM GriefShare Zoom meeting

TUESDAY, MAY 12

6:30 PM Session

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13

4:00 PM Youth Zoom meeting
5:00 PM Youth Zoom meeting

THURSDAY, MAY 14

10:30 AM Prayer Group Zoom meeting

SUNDAY, MAY 17

10:00 AM Online Worship Service
6:00 PM Youth Zoom meeting

MONDAY, MAY 18

6:30 PM GriefShare Zoom meeting

TUESDAY, MAY 19

6:30 PM Board of Deacons

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

4:00 PM Youth Zoom meeting
5:00 PM Youth Zoom meeting

THURSDAY, MAY 21

10:30 AM Prayer Group Zoom meeting

SUNDAY, MAY 24 SENIOR SUNDAY

10:00 AM Online Worship Service
6:00 PM Youth Zoom meeting

MONDAY, MAY 25 MEMORIAL DAY

Church office closed
6:30 PM GriefShare Zoom



TUESDAY, MAY 26

6:30 PM Session

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27

4:00 PM Youth Zoom meeting
5:00 PM Youth Zoom meeting

THURSDAY, MAY 28

10:30 AM Prayer Group Zoom meeting

SUNDAY, MAY 31

10:00 AM Online Worship Service
6:00 PM Youth Zoom meeting

Flowering of the Cross



While the pandemic changed our traditional celebration of Easter this year, families continued to place flowers on the First Presbyterian cross on the front lawn during Easter Sunday. From top clockwise: Will Bratton, the Williams family, the Pennstrom family, newlyweds Rhett and Eliza Spencer, and the Banner children, Jack, Morgan, and Ellison.

Remember in Prayer

Extended Care

Heritage at Lowman

Mac King

Heritage

George Richardson

Home

Adele Kassab

Casey Taylor

Methodist Manor

Madeline Brice

Joyce Floyd

Marie Jordan

Presbyterian Community

Hannah Barringer

Ann Cash

Aaron Leland

Tom and Clariann Kellam

Macy Turner

Memorials

Joe Bruce

Chuck Dennis

Anna Gregg

Sheila Ann Hartsell

Peggy Key

Sara Patton

Doris Blanton Poston

Joe Wolfe

Households

Flock 1: Brent and DeAnn Tiller, Weatherly, Laura

Flock 2: Marty and Heather Taylor, Keegan

Flock 3: Fred and Peggy Swearingen, Cory, Kyle

Flock 4: Zack Turner, Landon

Flock 5: Alan and Julie Thomas

Flock 6: Jerry and Sherril Fussell

Flock 7: Rick and Katherine Ryan, Richard, Katherine

Flock 8: Chris and Paige Alexander, Gracyn, John Joseph

Sympathy

Family of Anna Gregg

*Lord, Hear
Our Prayer*



Sick & Recovering

Madeline Brice

Jack Cagle

Betty Lee Gandy

Jimmy Green

Isla Louise McCoy

Glenn Odom

Rosanne Saunders

Peggy Corbin Scheu

Casey Taylor

Alan Thomas

Elders

Jim Dameron

Bryon Frost

Deacons

Margaret Jones

Cynthia Knudsen

Mission

PADD

Empowering Believers

Women in Ministry

Donna Grubb

Karen Silver

Sunday School Teachers

Meg Temple

Amy Williams

Staff

Ann Rodgers Chandler

Chris Handley

God's Work in our Community

Presbyterian Agency for the Developmentally Disabled



One of the local missions First Presbyterian Church supports is the Presbyterian Agency for the Developmentally Disabled (PADD), which exists for the benefit of developmentally disabled adults.

PADD is a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation chartered in South Carolina in the 2000. The mission was established by the Presbytery of New Harmony, a Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church USA. PADD is led by a volunteer Board of Trustees and continues a close relationship with Presbytery.

Its mission is to provide the highest quality of life and the greatest possible level of independence for each resident within the context of a community-based residential facility.

Its purpose is to build and operate homes, coordinate community services, create training and support programs, maintain standards and raise funding. PADD operates two homes in Florence for women with intellectual disabilities. All beds are occupied. The residents all attend a day program or are volunteers in our community. They also have a full slate of social activities: field trips, Miracle League, restaurants, church, movies, shopping...just to name a few. Prayer requests: Pray for the mission and that we are able to weather the COVID virus and our residents and staff stay well.

God's Work Around the World

Empowering Believers Connections

One of the global missions First Presbyterian Church supports is Empowering Believers Connections. EBC is a network of indigenous (Indian) mission agencies planting churches and transforming communities throughout the northeastern state of Bihar. The state is mostly Hindu and also has a large Muslim population as well as a mix of Buddhism, Jainism, Seiks, etc. EBC was founded and is led by Chandan Kumar Sah who employs multiple strategies to reach and transform communities, including Community Health Evangelism, Church Planting Movements, Disciple Making Movements, and Micro-Enterprise Development. Pramila, Chandan's wife, is instrumental in equipping and discipling women as she leads a strong women's ministry.

In November there was the launch of North West iDMM in Dehradun. Twenty-one leaders were identified so far and exploration continues. Thanks for your



Chandan and Pramila Sah

prayers as it was launched by faith.

Prayer requests: Please pray for the Win-Chattisgarh Network. Please pray for the ongoing Master Trainer's Training and Catalyst Training and the Resources needed for the same.

Also praise God for providing resources for the first year of this project and we are greatly thankful for this. Please pray for wisdom as for the East Strategy Coordinators two years project.



Church News

Keenagers cancels May luncheon

Keenagers will not meet in May. Because of the pandemic and government guidelines, the Keenagers luncheon will not be held.

Ministry team cancels Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School will not be held in June this summer because of the corona virus pandemic. Contact Susan Snow, susdus@aol.com, for information.

WinShape cancels summer camps

WinShape Camps for Communities canceled its summer camps for 2020 because of the pandemic: "Over the past several weeks, we have monitored the COVID-19 pandemic very closely to fully understand how it might impact our camps scheduled for Summer 2020. To prepare, we have put an incredible amount of effort into planning, modifying our operations, and taking every precautionary measure possible to ensure the safety of our staff, campers and camper families. Because of increasing government regulations across the country, and to do our part in keeping you and our campers safe, we have made the incredibly difficult decision ..."

Rev. Chris Handley, team leader for Helping Florence Flourish, which is the primary sponsor of the camp held in Florence, said: "Unfortunately, WinShape had to cancel due to virus issues. HFF certainly plans to bring WinShape back in the summer of 2021!"

GriefShare continues meetings online

GriefShare, a weekly support group, meets online during the coronavirus pandemic. GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences. Contact Susan Snow, susdus@aol.com, for more information about the teleconferencing.



FPC volunteers help provide meals

First Presbyterian Church's cook team and serving volunteers for My Brother's Keeper successfully completed two Tuesdays and will continue to serve at New Ebenezer Church with "My Brothers Keeper." My Brother's Keeper provides meals, showers, and clothing to roughly 150 people per day. If you are interested in serving please email Janet Brand, janet81661@aol.com.



GET INVOLVED! IT'S TIME TO SERVE!

SERVEFLO

SAVE THE DATES: JUNE 13-21, 2020

*"If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also.
If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him."*

- John 12:26



MISSION OF HELPING FLORENCE FLOURISH:

Helping Florence Flourish works toward a visible demonstration of the unity of the body of Christ (Jn 17:21) to bless Florence. (Jer. 29:7)

ServeFLO is a means by which HELPING FLORENCE FLOURISH strives to accomplish its vision.

ServeFLO is area churches coming together to bless Florence.

Teams from churches and ministries will fan out around our community to serve and bless during this season. Register your team or church at the ServeFlo website.

serveflo.org

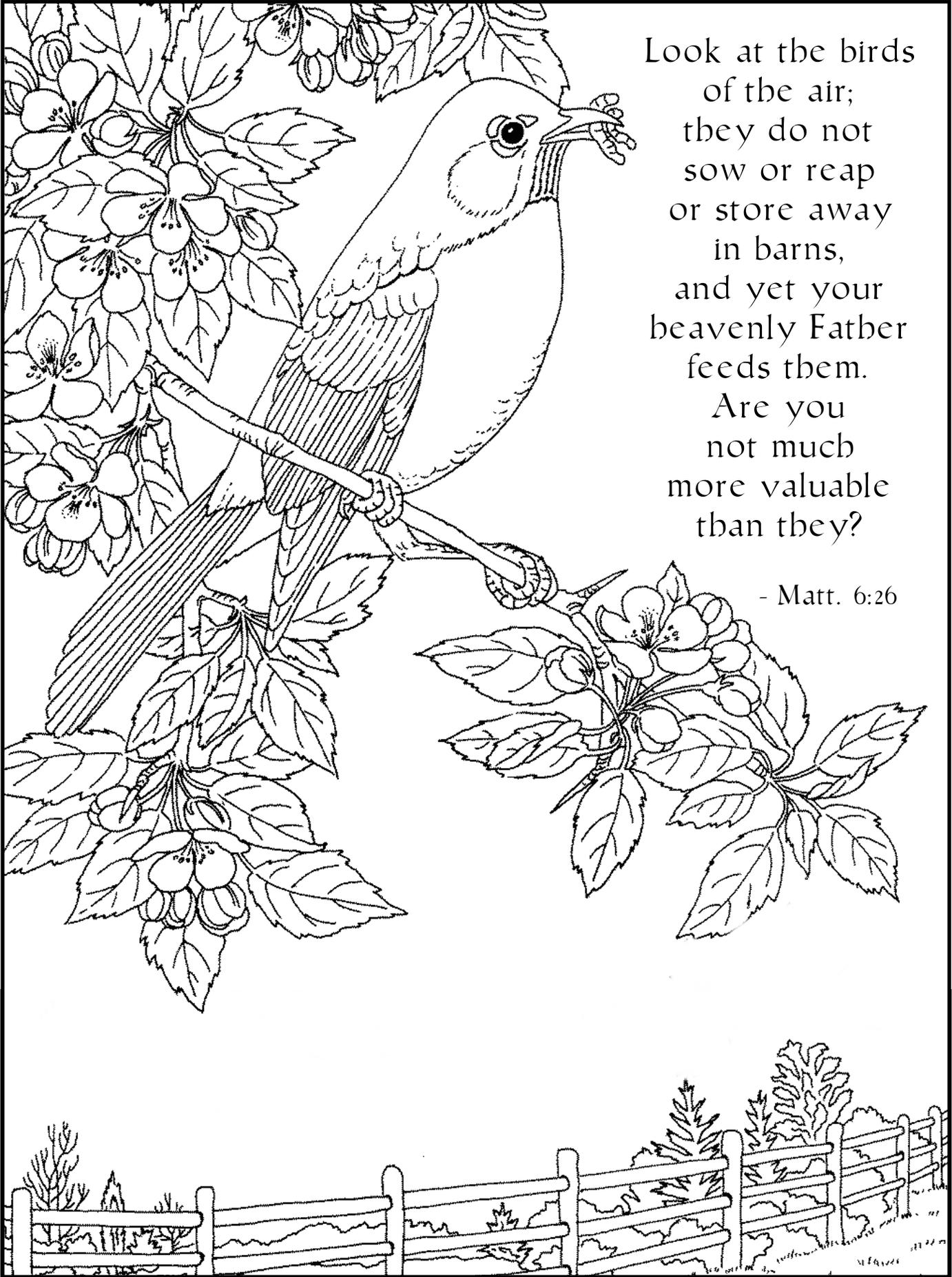
Teams can determine how they want to bless our community; or HFF will assist you in finding a way to be a blessing!

KICKOFF RALLY: The Downtown Roll and Run for Hope on Saturday, June 13.

Saturday, June 20, will be the focal point in our season of service, which runs June 13-21.

Below is a list of projects on which you can serve during this time:

- Downtown Roll
- City of Florence Parks and Rec Project
- House of Hope Tiny House
- House Repairs / Home Works
- Law Enforcement Luncheon
- Lighthouse Ministry Project
- Red Cross Blood Drive
- Resurrection Restoration for Homeless Project
- Run for Hope
- School Repairs (painting, cleaning, yardwork)
- Service Area of your choosing
- Trash pickup around Florence
- Unity Sunday: June 14
- YMCA Field Repairs



Look at the birds
of the air;
they do not
sow or reap
or store away
in barns,
and yet your
heavenly Father
feeds them.
Are you
not much
more valuable
than they?

- Matt. 6:26



CONFIRMATION JOURNEY

Please pray for the confirmands as they still walk with their mentors on this faith journey. Thank you confirmands, mentors, and families for being creative and flexible during this virus season.

Confirmand

Mac Burch
 Brooklynne Clancy
 Jacqueline Clancy
 Lily Green
 Joey Hall
 Ella Hylton
 Mason Slaughter
 Laura Tiller

Mentor

Jim Dameron
 Ashley Hylton
 Barbara Green
 Cynthia Knudsen
 Mike Fleenor
 Sally Dameron
 Paul Davis
 Kara Morgan



Mac Burch



Brooklynne Clancy



Jacqueline Clancy



Lily Green



Joey Hall



Ella Hylton



Mason Slaughter



Laura Tiller

Loving and teaching our children well

By **Chris Handley**

Associate Pastor

I was able to see the Fast family in action this week! Anna Parson and Henry were doing homework; Elizabeth was doing what toddlers do, toddling. Brian was parenting like a champ. Patricia was working to help make ends meet. What a joy to watch young families navigating the moment. I have to admit that being an observer is so much more pleasant than those currently parenting the moment. Certainly, these are trying times for families as they move through the Virus Days.

Our Discovery class is studying a portion of Ephesians that is relevant to families in all times. Paul is giving the Church a sense of what it means to live the Spirit-filled life. Humility, tolerant love and mutual submission describe the parent and the child who are Spirit-filled.

As Paul describes the Spirit filled life from different relational aspects he writes, "Children obey your parents for this pleases the Lord, honor your father and mother for this is the first commandment with a promise; that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." It is just "right" for children to learn obedience and as they do they will be blessed. (Things are more apt to go well, and long life is more possible. Not guaranteed but more likely.)

Then Paul says to fathers (and mothers) "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and in-



The Fast family spends time outside walking and riding in their neighborhood. Parents need to create an environment full of love, grace, support and encouragement.



**Parenting
is not for sissies**

struction of the Lord." In similar fashion Paul says in Colossians 3:21 "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged." Parenting that is done without Spirit filled-ness (humility, tolerant love and mutual submission) will lead to children who are less likely to turn to the Lord and be encouraged in faith.

Here is a list from Strassner of parental actions that "provoke" a child. Children are "provoked" by an angry, harsh parent; by parents choosing favorites; by inconsistent discipline; by parents that do not practice what they preach; by being unloving and unfair toward the other parent; and by being unable to admit their own faults and being too proud to seek forgiveness.

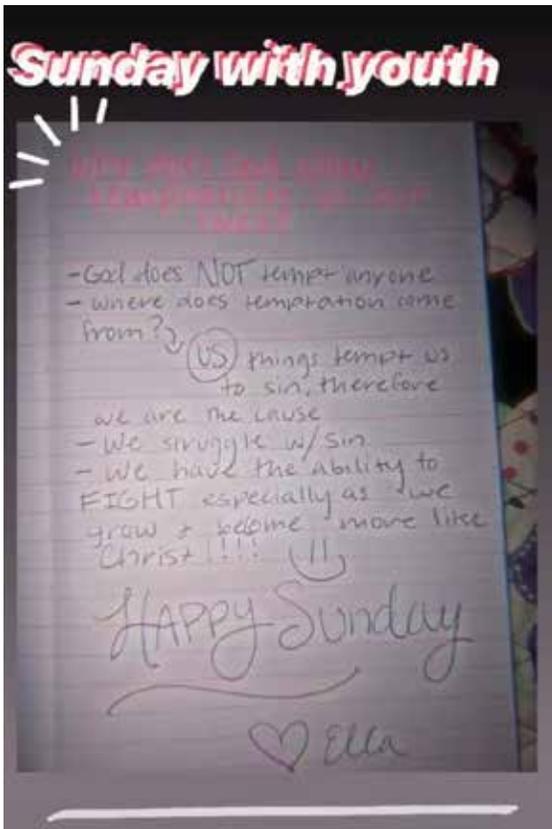
Instead of "provoking" Paul encourages parents to bring their children up in "the discipline and instruction

of the Lord." Explaining what Paul means here, Snodgrass encourages parents to create an environment of grace, love, support and encouragement; to always speak the truth in love (rather than be condescending, and frustrating); to pay attention to the material and emotional needs of children (We are all needy. As a parent you have the joy of providing for the needs of your child.). Teaching, warning and disciplining are all part of life in Christ; in other words parents give their children a theology of life. Finally, parents filled with the Spirit will refuse to put down, demean or damage their child.

The Christian life is all about growing in and with Jesus. As I reflect on my life, I know that I could be a more Spirit filled parent. Join me in asking the Lord to continue to minister His grace to your heart and put to death the old ways of your heart so you can love your children well!

(Thoughts taken from K. Strassner Opening up Ephesians (p. 127) and Klyne Snodgrass: The NIV Application Commentary on Ephesians p.329.)

Youth Ministry



Youth Schedule for April*

- Sunday School: May 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31 / 11:30 a.m. / Lesson posted on Marco Polo
- No Small group
- MOVE: May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 / 6-7 p.m. / Zoom meeting with lesson
- 412 on Wednesdays: May 6, 13, 20, 27/ 4 and 5 p.m. / Zoom meeting with Bible study
- No East Florence Mission

Coronavirus 2020

- Youth ministry continues despite the quarantine caused by COVID-19. We have been able to meet via Zoom and Marco Polo at our normal times on Sundays and Wednesdays. These times have been fruitful despite not being able to be together physically. We have been studying the book of James on Wednesdays and the book of Romans on Sundays. Continue to pray for the youth ministry during these times, especially that the students would engage in the meetings and with the Word.

Summer Conferences*

- As of right now, both Great Escape and Fun in The Son (FITS) are proceeding as planned. Great Escape is the week of June 8-12 and FITS is the week of July 6-10. We will still plan to attend both of these conferences if they happen. Great Escape will arrive quickly with all that is going on. If possible, please let me know tentatively if your middle schooler will attend if we go. I will continue to update as I receive updates from YCM.

Graduation Sunday*

- Graduation Sunday is when we recognize seniors from the youth group that are graduating. This year's Graduation Sunday will take place Sunday, May 24, during the worship service. Students are to wear their graduation caps and gowns. Please join us as we celebrate the accomplishment of our seniors!

*schedule subject to change



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CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor and Head of Staff	Dr. Darryl Evans
Associate Pastor	Rev. Chris Handley
Congregational Care Assistant	Rev. Mike Fleenor
Director of Music/Organist	Mrs. Ann Rodgers Chandler
Interim Praise Team Leader	Mr. Keith Hamrick
Director of Youth Ministry	Mr. Brock Page
Interim Children's Ministry Director	Mrs. Susan Snow
Child Development Center Director	Mrs. Beth Hepler
Church Administrator	Rev. Don Hebert
Ministry Assistant	Ms. Teresa Stewart
Financial Assistant	Mrs. Gwen DuRant
Ministry Assistant	Ms. Kimberly Brauss
Head Custodian	Mr. Ron Echols
Custodian	Mr. Sidney Ruff
Housekeeping	Ms. Wanda LaSane

