



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF DUNN

FIRST WORDS

SEPTEMBER 2018

A blue-tinted photograph of a church steeple against a clear sky, serving as a background for the central text.

Loving God.
Loving our neighbors.
Because Christ loves us first.

A Note From Our Pastor

A Birth, A Death, and A Storm

Our first Wednesday night program was not going to go as planned: Hurricane Florence was due to arrive on our doorstep the next day, so our church staff began debating whether or not we should cancel. “They’ve already canceled school, it seems to me like everyone’s going to be hunkering down getting ready for the storm,” one person said. “On the other hand, if you’ve got kids, and you’re facing a week trapped inside with no power, you might delight in the chance to get out of the house for a moment.”



In the end, we decided to go ahead and have our Wednesday night programming as planned. But instead of our normal Bible Study, we’d spend our time talking about how we’re getting ready for the hurricane, and how we can be prepared to respond on the other side. With our smallest kids during story time, we changed the words to the bounce song, and sang “God’s everlasting love is bigger, is bigger, is bigger than the storm.”

At the start of that Wednesday night meeting, Cora Sue Beasley told me her daughter Jennifer was on the way to the hospital, and her new grandson Tripp would soon be born in the midst of the hurricane. “I’ll pray they’ll be safe!” I told them.

At the end of that Wednesday night meeting, I got a phone call. Margaret Lee, a saint of our church who served as our secretary in the 1980's and 1990's, had passed away. We'd have to hold off until after the storm to have her funeral. "You'll be in my prayers in this time of grief," I told her family.

A birth, a death, a storm.

In Matthew 7, Jesus says that the reason for following him all comes down to two basic facts of life.

1) Everyone builds a house.

If there is anything we ought to learn from the start of a new life, when a child is born, or the end of an old life, when a person passes away, it's that life precious. We only have so much time to make something out of ourselves. It is as if, Jesus says, with everything we do, we are building a house for our souls. Maybe our souls find rest in money, or material, or power or privilege, maybe they find rest in accolades or accomplishments, or maybe in friends and family. In the end, though, each of our souls finds a home somewhere, the only question is what kind of home we're going to build for our souls and the kind of home we build matters because...

2) A storm is always coming.

Storms, of course, are not always hurricanes. Sometimes it's illness, sometimes it's poverty or violence. Sometimes you lose your job, sometimes you lose your business, sometimes your family falls apart. Lots of people go through life trying to avoid the storms, but the truth is the storms are unavoidable, they're always coming, and they touch each of our lives one way or another.

If that's the case then, the greatest question we can ask ourselves is whether or not the house we build is one that withstands the storm, when the wind and rain and floodwaters come. Christ came to show us how to build that kind of house. He says to let your soul find rest in the love of God, he said, and build the rest of your life on top of that, because the love of God is a love that can withstand any kind of storm.

Peace and Grace

Rev. Howard Dudley

A Music Moment



Obligation or Opportunity

Is it time for work again? Where did the weekend go? Practice starts when? You need how much? What committee is meeting? As Charlie Brown would say, "Good grief!"

Mounting obligations and responsibilities whittle away at life. If a diamond symbolizes the hours each day we are allotted to be with the ones we love, then the obligations, how well meaning and necessary they may be, chisel away a portion of the diamond. Quite literally, that tends to rub us the wrong way.

Sometimes church feels the same. Another meeting. Time for this class? An extra rehearsal? More paperwork? It is the nature of a living organism to need constant care. Such is the body of Christ. We are a living, breathing body who needs continual care and attention. Balancing the necessary care and obligations with the portion of life

that we serve for family, friends and leisure is complex. On the one hand, believers desire to fulfill their part in the body of Christ so that the body thrives. All the parts must work together to ensure a healthy existence. Yet, the living, breathing organism of family is also needful of time and energy. The songwriter of Psalms writes, 'I desire to do your will, my God . . . I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness from the great assembly.' (40:8, 10) Is there a peaceful place between doing the will of God in the body and being who God wants you to be in your home? Does a place of reconciliation exist? Maybe that is the wrong question entirely. Should the two ever be at odds with each other? Ideally, no. Families serving in the body of Christ together is a living testimony to the mercy and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Family is God's idea. The church, the body of Christ, is God's design as well.

The obligations we have to our family and to our church might be less of a dread if we change our perspective. The tasks will always be endless and mundane. That will likely go unchanged. However, viewed with a new set of lenses, these duties are adventures in disguise. Obligations are actually opportunities to demonstrate our love for our family and the family of God. I don't HAVE to sing in the choir. I get to sing in the choir because it is an opportunity to proclaim to the body of Christ the greatness and wonder of God. And the whole family can come. I don't HAVE to be on the cooking team. I get to be on the cooking team because Christ gave his love and life for us, so I get to serve a meal to others. And the whole family can come. Many of our ordinary obligations are opportunities to serve *with* our families in the body of Christ. Surrendering to the opportunities, instead of dreading the obligations, is key to inner peace in the midst of it all.

Hope you can bring your entire family to a new year of opportunities on Wednesday evenings. Children in grades K-5 begin at 5 pm with chimes and singing. A meal for the family is served at 6 pm. The Youth will meet at 6:30 for instrument playing and worship. The Adults will join Pastor Howard for Bible study in the fellowship hall. The Adult Choir (which would gladly welcome teens as well) meets at 7:15 in the choir room. Multiple opportunities!

News From the DCE

What to Do When a Great Kick-off Comes to a Discouraging Halt

During the month of August, there was great energy building in and around our church. If you ran into Howard Dudley, you could sense that he was vibrating with anticipation about our congregation returning from their summer adventures and the opportunity to rejuvenate old programs and institute new ones. And that's what happened. We had a glorious Kick-off on September 9th with Rally Day and the Youth Ministries followed by the first Wednesday Fellowship and Children's Programs on September 12th. Attendance was high; joy was evident; prospects were looking up. Then just as the excitement and renewed commitment really began to pick up steam, Hurricane Florence came and tried to blow and wash it away. So much discouragement—homes and belongings destroyed, power lost, families displaced or isolated from resources. Should we cancel worship? What about Wednesday night?



The Books of Haggai and Ezra: Rebuilding the Temple

Under King Solomon, the people of Israel had built a magnificent temple. Then it was destroyed, and most were exiled to Babylon for 70 years. When they were allowed to return to their homeland, among their first tasks was the rebuilding of the temple, and for the first 2 years, they took on the project with zeal. Then came the discouragement. In the Bible, the story is told by Ezra who focused on the external forces of the local people like the Samaritans who interfered with and opposed the new constructions to the point that the Israelites stopped working. *Ezra 4:4 Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building.* The prophet, Haggai, told the story from the internal viewpoint—once discouraged, the people of Israel began to focus on their own interests and thus neglected the temple. But Haggai became their cheerleader, encouraging them after more than 15 years to go back to work on the

temple. *Haggai 1:3 Then Haggai the prophet spoke the word of the LORD: 4 "Is it right for you to be living in fancy houses while the Temple is still in ruins?"* With Haggai inspiring them, the temple was completed in around 4 years. Quite an accomplishment! Some complained that although the second temple was the same size as the first, it was not a grand. However, the new temple seemed more accessible to the common people. Its most significant importance would not occur until around 500 years later when Jesus Himself would walk and teach inside its walls. *Luke 21:37 Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called.*

Hurricane Florence Gives Us an Opportunity to Rebuild

First Presbyterian Church was blessed to have experienced a lot of growth last year--spiritually as well as in its membership and programs. And although the summer may have taken us away, we came back with great plans to build on the work of the past year. Then came the external forces of a hurricane putting a temporary halt to our plans. We were distracted by the inconveniences Florence brought to our own lives. We got caught up in the immediate needs of our own families and homes. However, we are being cheered on by God to take up the call to action and rebuild, perhaps not using our own original plan from August but one created by the Great Architect, God. In the past week, we built community as our youth cleaned the church grounds and the lawns of our neighbors. The footprint of our love for our neighbor may be seen across most of the Tarheel State as we reach out with supplies for the restoration of homes. So do not be discouraged. The months to come will bring opportunities to rebuild God's temple on Earth, not as we intended, but as He lays out the floor-plan. Moreover, it will be grander than our own design, because others will see Jesus more clearly in what we do.
1 Corinthians 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?

Announcements



The **First Presbyterian Church Shoe Fall Project** will take place on October 26th. Working with local schools, FPC provides shoes and socks to students in need from primary school through high school. Students are identified by their teachers, school social workers, and school counselors to go to Payless Shoes in Dunn to select a pair of shoes. Each student also receives a pair of socks.

Members of the church also assist in shoe fitting and share His love amongst these students. Please consider donating to this worthy cause using the envelopes provided in Sunday's bulletin.

Men's Retreat

Calling all men to the lake shore for our First Presbyterian Church Men's Retreat. October 12th - 13th in White Lake, North Carolina. Join us for a time of fellowship, worship and bible study led by spiritual writer Derek Maul. The cost is just \$50 a man. Sign up today!



<https://fpcdunn.breezechms.com/form/d16bb2>

2018-19 Wednesday Programming Schedule

| Time | Nursery <small>(Ages 0-2 yrs)</small> | JELLYs <small>(Ages 3-4 yrs)</small> | JAM Jrs <small>(Grades K-2)</small> | JAM <small>(Grades 3-5)</small> | Youth <small>(Grades 6-12)</small> | Adults |
|--------------|--|--|---|--|---|---------|
| 5:00-5:30 PM | | | Chimes <small>(Sanctuary)</small> | Choir <small>(Choir Room)</small> | | |
| 5:30-6:00 PM | | Storytime & Music <small>(3 & 4 Nursery)</small> | Choir <small>(Choir Room)</small> | Handbells <small>(Upstairs Bell Rm)</small> | | |
| 6:00-6:30 PM | Dinner | Dinner | Dinner | Dinner | Dinner | Dinner |
| 6:30-7:00 PM | Nursery | Nursery | Bible Lesson <small>(Upstairs)</small> | Bible Lesson <small>(Upstairs)</small> | Music & Instruments <small>(Youth Rm)</small> | Program |
| 7:15 PM | | | | | | Choir |

Dates to Remember

October 1: Presbyterian Women Circle Meetings

October 7: Men of the Church Meeting/Breakfast

October 7: Two Cents a Meal Collection

October 12: Men of the Church Retreat

October 14: Communion

October 16: Red Cross Blood Drive

Prayer Concerns

Larry Bacon
 Helen Barefoot
 Billy Barfield
 Amy Bass
 Margaret Beasley
 Mr & Mrs. Kelly Byrd
 Abe & Jackie Elmore
 Joe & Tanya Giles

Billy Godwin
 Keilah Goff
 Barbrah Henry
 Tammy Lockamy
 Jessie Price
 Butch Raynor
 Gloria Ryals
 Howard Seuss



September Birthdays

| | | | |
|-------------------|----|----------------------|----|
| Johnson Godwin | 1 | Kevin Allen | 18 |
| Riley Heath | 1 | Johnson Tilghman | 19 |
| Courtney Williams | 5 | Grace Deboer | 20 |
| Madison Hales | 6 | Jarrett Hodges | 20 |
| Don Hodges | 6 | Steve Malone | 20 |
| Tilghman Pope | 6 | Logan Patrick | 20 |
| Priscilla Weber | 7 | Matthew Green | 22 |
| Heather Jackson | 9 | Patrick Green | 22 |
| Elaine Tart | 9 | Lee Malone | 22 |
| Rebecca Hales | 10 | Sara Brown | 23 |
| Meda Williams | 10 | Jim Gray | 23 |
| Gene Chance | 11 | Rick Stephenson | 23 |
| Linwood Beasley | 12 | Alexander Turlington | 24 |
| Faye Jackson | 12 | Katie Dickens | 26 |
| Lisa Bradham | 13 | Keira Stevens | 26 |
| Reid Whittington | 15 | Lauren Taylor | 26 |
| Erin Young | 15 | Brian Foster | 28 |
| Noel Bass | 16 | Angie Hathaway | 28 |
| Barbara Hartgrove | 17 | Patsy Williams | 30 |

October Birthdays

| | | | |
|-------------------|----|-------------------|----|
| Travis Strickland | 01 | Mia Johnson | 19 |
| Curtis Godwin | 02 | Chuck Robinson | 19 |
| Charlene Lee | 02 | Susan Pope-Opton | 20 |
| Jack Jackson | 03 | Meredith Wermel | 20 |
| Callie Harper | 04 | John Willoughby | 23 |
| Russ Warren | 04 | Gloria Davis | 24 |
| Brooke Wilson | 09 | Amanda Strickland | 25 |
| Kathy Hatley | 12 | Chris Goff | 26 |
| Barbara Bax | 13 | Cora Sue Beasley | 27 |
| Gina Warren | 13 | Raymon Hamilton | 27 |
| Patsy Powell | 14 | West Stanley | 27 |
| Mark Sasser | 17 | Clem Medley | 29 |
| Kyle Glover | 18 | Daniel Goff | 31 |
| Anne Johnson | 19 | | |

Interested in upcoming events at First Presbyterian Church? Be sure to check out our [online calendar](#) on the church website!



Nursery Attendants

September 30

Jason & Morgan Colmenero
Will & Mary Gage

October 7

Travis Strickland & Amanda Norris
Russ & Gina Warren

October 14

Andy & Meredith Wermel
Billy & Lynn Godwin

October 21

Will & Angie Hathaway
Gerald & Kathy Hatley

Security Monitors

September 30 - Harry Byrd
October 7 - Willie Suggs
October 14 - Bryant Pope
October 21 - Chip Youngblade

Deacon Greeters

(September)

Natalie Turner
Melissa Stevens
Jackye Sholar

(October)

Russ Warren
Faye Jackson
Casey Kerley

Elder at the Door

September 30 - Lisa Fitchett
October 7 - Lisa Fitchett
October 14 - Caron Stewart
October 21 - Courtney Williams



Dunn Community Blood Drive

Held at First Presbyterian Church
901 N Park Ave
Dunn, NC 28334

Tuesday, October 16, 2018
1:30 PM to 6:00 PM

To schedule your lifesaving appointment visit www.redcrossblood.org and enter sponsor code: "Dunn" or download the Blood Donor App!

Contact Anne Johnson with any questions at
(919) 407-9867 .

WE NEED ALL ELIGIBLE DONORS!!

As a thank you for coming to give this October, you'll be automatically entered to win one of five \$500 gift cards redeemable at hundreds of merchants. See: rcblood.org/goal

Download the Blood Donor App | redcrossblood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS

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First Presbyterian Church | 910-892-4121 | fpcdunnoffice@gmail.com | www.fpcdunn.org

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