

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ROANOKE RAPIDS NC

First Presbyterian Church seeks to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ by expressing our love for Him and our neighbors through worship, discipleship, stewardship, fellowship, congregational care, and mission.

In Touch



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A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In the early church there began a movement where people would retreat from the demands that life imposed and go live with people who meditated and prayed to God as a regular part of their day.

This movement is still in existence today. It is known as cenobitic monasticism. The word “cenobite” (pronounced *sen-oh-bite*) derives from two words in Greek. The first word *koinos* means common. The second word *bios* means life. The two words together describe the idea of life lived in common, or, as we often call it, community.

This is different from a much earlier form of monasticism known as eremitic. You can think of the word “hermit” to help you understand what eremitic monasticism is. This type of monasticism is life lived alone. A person who chooses this life often lives under harsh conditions. Eremitic monks mostly pray. They deny most comforts in order to devote themselves to thinking of God. Although being alone and devoting one’s life to God sounds like a virtuous life, big doses of this lifestyle are hazardous. The eremite’s life often drove many to nervous breakdowns. The life of a cenobitic monk was easier in contrast. Even cenobitic monks who took vows of silence were still able to live in the community and eat and worship among other monks.

Life in a monastery, or cenobium, was rhythmic too. There would often be prayers during the day and night. The first prayers of the day were matins and lauds. These were said in the middle of the night. The next was the prime and was said at sunrise. The next, terce at 9:00 am. The next, Sext was at noon. None (which is spelled like the word “none”) was at 3:00 pm. Vespers were said at sunset. Compline was said at bedtime. In between prayers, the monks would often attend to duties that kept the monastery running. Cleaning needed to be done. Food needed to be raised, harvested, and prepared. Buildings were maintained. Tools were made. The monastery was not only a home for a holy community, it was a center of industry.

The monastic communities were made up of either men or women. There were no co-educational monasteries. As a result monasteries encouraged relationships that were deep, even intimate, but not manifested in the ways romantic relationships were. Monks got to know each other very well. They cared for each other when they were sick or injured. They carried on lively discussions and pulled pranks on one another. The monastic life was one that was devoted to God but at the same time allowed the monks opportunities to be creative through music, visual art, or writing. At its best cenobitic monasticism encouraged loving relationships where all could grow spiritually until they breathed their last breath.

A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

I bring up the concept of cenobitic monasticism because since the pandemic has left us our life together as a faith community seems to have an added intentionality to it, like the cenobitic monks. I think we crave and enjoy just a little bit more being in the company of one another. We are no longer a church of children's programs and camping trips. We are a church that can afford to focus on the world and the people on it. We can thoughtfully consider a problem and gather people around a solution. We can devote ourselves to prayer and meditation. We can do bible studies with people in other congregations. We can focus on our spiritual growth and enjoy the company of others who have chosen to do the same. Although we are not in the same close quarters of a monastery, there is a bit of cenobitic monasticism in our life together. I lift this up to you because I think that this is a beautiful thing we have been given in our life together. We are being invited to grow into the final phase of our life and become the beings that God wants for us to be. To close this note, I'd like to share with you a poem by Michael Dennis Browne called "Pilgrims Hymn." I can hear and see you living the words of this poem.

Even before we call on Your name
To ask You, O God,
When we seek for the words to glorify You,
You hear our prayer;
Unceasing love, O unceasing love,
Surpassing all we know.

Glory to the Father,
And to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit.

Even with the darkness sealing us in,
We breathe Your name,
And through all the days that follow so fast,
We trust in You;
Endless Your grace, O endless Your grace,
Beyond all mortal dream.

Both now and for ever,
And unto ages and ages,
Amen.

Grace and peace,

Joe



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

**Presbyterian Women will meet on
Tuesday, May 2nd in the Loy
Building.**

**Morning Circle will meet at
9:30 am and the Afternoon Circle
will meet at 1:30 pm.**

**Please read Lesson #9 which will
be discussed at both meetings.**

All women are invited to come to either circle!

HAPPY MAY BIRTHDAY

Jack Kiger—May 1

Ben White—May 1

Susan Gaylor—May 4

Noreen Knudson—May 8

Phillip Wingfield—May 10

Debbie Powell—May 21

Faye Brown—May 23

Dennis Gaylor—May 23

Ben Ricks—May 26

Muzette Kiger—May 28

Joe Sandoval—May 28

William Shives—May 31



**Prayers for Healing of Friends &
Families of the Church**

Priscilla Ricks
Bill Howell
Glenn & Gayle Garner, @ Meals on Wheels
Sally Ray and G.C. Warren
Sandra Stephenson
The homeless
Doug Hayes
Linda Ray
Roger Fuester
Jeff Peedin
Frank Lonesky
B.T. Brown
Darlene Kassner
Sheryl & Wayne O'Neil
Cathy Hux Keeter
Sandy Sandoval
Rev. Mitzi Leshner-Thomas
Victims of the war in Ukraine
Jeff Gibson
Reid Hinson
John Shives
Doug Thompson
James Spragins
Michael Shelby
Bill Graham
Ellie Parker
Allyson Johnson
Grace Fishel
Bev Hummel
Tony Martin, Jr.
Ila Burnett
Kenny Phipps, Jr.
Lee Cranford
Susan Barmer
James Brewer
Faye Brown
Mary Small

**If you have someone that needs to be on the prayer list
or someone that needs to come off, please contact
Susan Gaylor at sdgaylor@outlook.com or
call her at 678-4228.**

Roanoke Rapids High School

Presents



Thursday, May 11 & Friday, May 12
7:30 pm

Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina

Tickets: Adults—\$10.00

Students and Youth—\$5.00

Available in advance and at the door

FLOWERS

Anyone interested in
putting flowers in the
Sanctuary on Sundays
please contact Mary Small
at
movingmom@charter.net

Please include your name,
date of placing flowers and
your phone number.

Thanks!



To my Christian family at First
Presbyterian Church:

Thank-you once again for your
prayers, visits, food and cards
following my recent surgery. The
love you've shown me is very
special and irreplaceable. I'm blessed in many
ways but especially so, because the Lord led me
to First Church. Peace be with you all.

Yours in Christ, Bev



We're in need of
volunteers to run our
streaming service on
Sunday mornings!

Please contact Nancy
Sandoval if you would be
interested in learning and
helping with this great
outreach ministry!

WITNESS COMMITTEE NEWS

Hello from the Witness Committee

Have you seen our Food Pantry located between the Administration Building and the Walker Building? Joe and his team did a fantastic job constructing our gift of help to hungry people in our area. Thank-you to everyone involved with making this dream a reality. From time to time we will be asking our congregation to bring items to help restock the Food Pantry.

Recently we have received a grant for \$2,000.00 to support our Book Bag Buddy program. Thanks to Susan Gaylor for applying yearly for this grant. We're all paying more for groceries and the price increases have affected everyone including our main food source, the Food Bank of Eastern and Central North Carolina. This grant money will help us continue fulfilling the needs of hungry students at Aurelian Springs Elementary School.

We are continuing to collect new and gently used children's books. These will be distributed to Guardian Ad Litem, Aurelian Springs School and the Emergency Room at ECU North Hospital. Thank-you Marie and her committee for preparing the books for delivery.

We are continuing with some plans for future fellowship meals. Look for announcements about these plans in the near future. God be with you all. Happy gardening!

Bev Hummel Reporting

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S FOOD PANTRY



MAY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

TUESDAY, MAY 2

9:30 am PW Morning Circle

1:30 pm PW Afternoon Circle

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3

7:00 pm Choir

SUNDAY, MAY 7

9:30 am Sunday School

10:30 am Coffee Fellowship

11:00 am Worship

MONDAY, MAY 8

6:00 pm Worship Committee (Parlor)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10

7:00 pm Choir

THURSDAY, MAY 11

6:00 pm Finance & Personnel Committee



SUNDAY, MAY 14

MOTHER'S DAY

9:30 am Sunday School

10:30 am Coffee Fellowship

11:00 am Worship

MAY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17

12:30 pm Lunch Bunch—El Tenampa

1:00 pm Witness Committee

7:00 pm Choir

SUNDAY, MAY 21

9:30 am Sunday School

10:30 am Coffee

11:00 am Worship

12:00 pm PW Birthday (Loy Bldg.)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24

7:00 pm Choir

SUNDAY, MAY 28—PENTECOST

9:30 am Sunday School

10:30 am Coffee

11:00 Worship—COMMUNION

Pentecost Offering

WEDNESDAY, MAY 31

7:00 pm Choir





Did You Know?

Rev. Stanley White was our second pastor and the first to perform a marriage for FPC. The couple was a Mr. & Mrs. Joyner (parents of Lib Brown, who many of you knew). The second one was Bertha White and Paul Robinson (my parents). Mother's name is in the cornerstone and Daddy allowed prospective members to meet in his Roanoke Opera House when the church was being organized and before First Presbyterian Church was built.

Rev. Hugh Bradley, our fourth pastor, was the brother-in-law of Katherine Carraway whose sister was married to him. Rev. Bradley married Katherine and Dr. Bennett Carraway at his home in Tennessee where he had a church. Dr. Carraway was the first veterinarian we had in Roanoke Rapids.

Rev. Lawrence Stell, our fifth pastor, was an unusually handsome man and many in town thought he was even better looking than Rudolph Valentino—star of the silent movies. He also was the interlocutor for several of the Kiwanis minstrels.

Rev. John M. Walker, Jr., our sixth pastor, was an avid hiker and almost finished the Appalachian trail. He walked everywhere he went in town and never used notes for his sermons, weddings, funerals or communions—even poems he knew by heart. He could also tell blood curdling ghost stories by the fire in the old manse next to the church when our pioneer and youth fellowships would occasionally meet there. Also, one Sunday when there was deep, deep

snow and ice on the roads he walked to church (of course) from his home on Virginia Street to find no one at church.

Soon after arriving in comes Joe Talley who had walked from his home on Wilson Street. The two of them had a church service—complete with a full sermon and they even sang a hymn. Mr. Walker was widely known for his wonderfully creative wood carvings. One is at Davidson College, three at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond and many at Montreat, where he and his wife Amelia retired. In June of 1973, Mr. Walker was bestowed with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Davidson. Johnny Mack never liked to be called Reverend Walker as he said he was no more a reverend than any other believer. Faye Brown remembers him in his closing prayer always saying “Bless those who work today and those who have no work to do”.

And then comes the charismatic Frank Covington, our seventh pastor, his lovely wife Carol and precious daughter, Amanda. In no time many, many people in Roanoke Rapids know Frank and he could be frequently seen at Rosemary Restaurant having lunch or dinner with various folk of different faiths. Our church membership grew considerably during his time with us and he was instrumental in the vision of a Sunday School building where the old manse stood. After being completed in 1991 at a cost of \$331,000 it was named The Walker Building. We were all sad when they left.

David McDonald, our eighth pastor, had a brilliant mind and was faithful in pastoral visits. However, he was the only pastor the congregation ever asked to leave. It was a difficult and painful time for the church.

After David left we had an interim pastor, Jane Love. Jane brought much needed healing, nurturing and energy to us.

We were very grateful for her ministry and leadership during the aftermath of David being asked to leave.

And this brings us to our dear Joe Sandoval, who has been with us for 13 years come August. He and dear Nancy bring

their beautiful singing voices to us each Sunday and both are so very talented in numerous ways. Joe is treasured for his warm hugs and his ability and willingness to do anything around the church and for others, that need to be done. Their story is still being written and we are truly blessed they are with us.

It would be remiss if I did not share with you our very own young folk who were interested in the ministry. First was Jon Murray, brother of Lelia Hagamy, who was one of our faithful members. Jon was ordained, preached for many years, went to Union Theological Seminary in Richmond and on a couple of occasions filled the pulpit here. Next came Charles Hasty, son of active members also. Charles graduated from Davidson and Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. To my knowledge he only preached once here in his home church. Next came Swain Loy, also son of faithful members. Swain was also a graduate of Davidson College and a student at Union Theological Seminary in New York City until his untimely death in 1956. Though Swain had not yet graduated from the seminary, he filled the pulpit here on several occasions and also at Bolling Road Chapel when it was getting started and before Rev. Stanley White came out of retirement and became the pastor there. And then there was Blount Batton, also son of active members. Blount went to seminary for a year and then decided he could better serve the Lord in other ways.

May the Lord bless us in the years to come with more young people who feel the call to become ministers of His Word and to fill our pulpits.

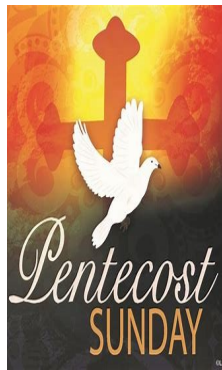
More DID YOU KNOW? in the June issue of In Touch.....

Betty Keyes

We are looking for a picture of Rev. David McDonald. If you have one during the time period that he was here, please bring it to the church office. It doesn't matter if other people are also in the picture. Thanks!

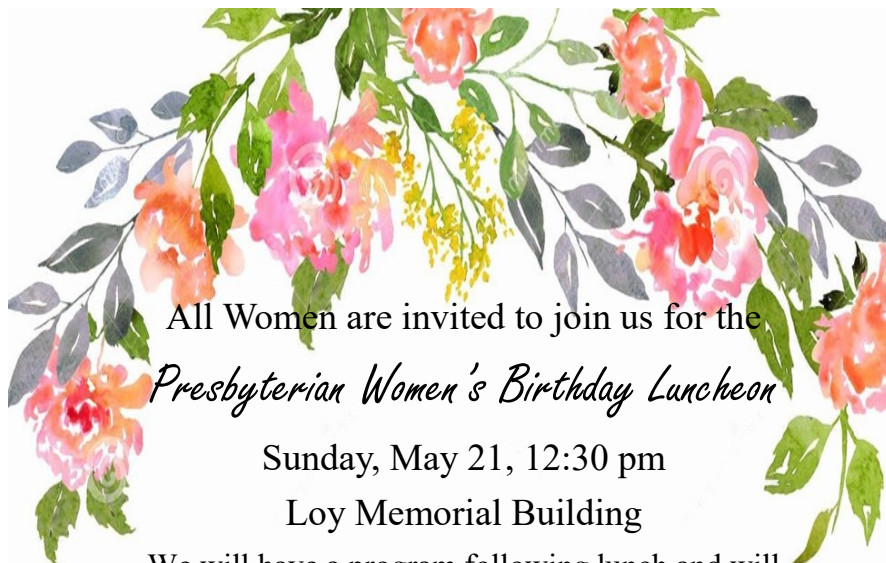
LUNCH BUNCH IS BACK!!!

Join us each month at 12:30 pm (on a Wednesday) at a different restaurant in town to dine and fellowship together. Everyone is welcome to come to this “Dutch” affair. We will meet at El Tenampa on Wednesday, May 17, 12:30 pm. See you there!



Each year on Pentecost Sunday, which is May 28, we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit remains with us, connecting us with *the church of the past*, inspiring *the church of today* and pointing us to *the church of the future*.

The celebration is marked by the receiving of the Pentecost Offering which supports programs for young people. 40% of our offering received will stay in our local community. Checks can be made to FPC with “Pentecost” in the memo line.



All Women are invited to join us for the
Presbyterian Women's Birthday Luncheon

Sunday, May 21, 12:30 pm

Loy Memorial Building

We will have a program following lunch and will receive the Birthday Offering at this time.

**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

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**MAY 2023
IN TOUCH**

