

August, 2017  
Volume 55, Issue 8

# The COLUMNS



First Presbyterian Church  
Waynesboro, VA

*First Presbyterian Church of Waynesboro is a community-minded congregation living out the love of Christ as we serve one another with humility, gentleness, and patience through God's grace.*

## Sunday Morning Worship Schedule

## Church Office

### Hours

8:45 a.m.—Communion Worship Service; Barksdale  
8:00 – 2:30

Room

11:00 a.m.—Traditional Worship Service; Sanctuary

Monday – Wednesday -

Thursday – 8:00 – 4:30

Friday – Closed



Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) was a French mathematician and philosopher, generally heralded as one of the most important thinkers in the pre-Enlightenment (Classical) era. Pascal was responsible for many advances and insights in the natural and applied sciences, such as hydrodynamics, and much of his work would lay the foundation for modern fields of study like probability theory. At the age of nineteen Pascal invented the first of his mechanical calculators, dubbed “the Pascaline”, seen today as a forerunner of modern computing. As was the fashion of the day, Pascal relied greatly upon logic and reason in his approach to a variety of intellectual disciplines. A series of events in life prompted Pascal to embark on a religious conversion of sorts. He became closely associated with a Roman Catholic school of thought known as Jansenism, which emphasized the teachings of the 5<sup>th</sup> century scholar Augustine of Hippo. (John Calvin also was greatly influenced by Augustine.) Yet ever the mathematician, Pascal sought to apply principles of logic and reason to his newly rediscovered faith.

In his musings, Pascal developed a theory which would later become known as “Pascal’s Wager,” by which Pascal sought to rationalize belief in God. In his posthumous collection of life’s work, the *Pensées*, Pascal states that regardless of the arguments one might make in favor of or against the existence of God, in the end there remains a fifty-fifty probability; either God is or God is not. Human life basically constitutes a wager of sorts that everyone must play, weighing probabilities as to the existence of God. “Let us estimate these two chances,” Pascal reasons. On the one hand, if there is a God, that would mean God’s promises of eternal life also are true. On the other hand, if there is no God, neither is there life after death, which would also mean that you wouldn’t be aware of it, anyway. “If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing.” (*Pensées*, III, 233).

In Pascal's view, there were two options, just as there were two probabilities; thus, there were four distinct potential outcomes. Assuming God exists, if you believe, you gain heavenly reward. If you disbelieve, and God does exist, then you risk the perils of hell. Assuming God does not exist, those who disbelieve might feel less morally constrained in life; yet if you believe and it turns out that God does not exist, the only thing you ever risk is wasted time. "Wager, then, without hesitation that He is," Pascal advises. "There is here an infinity of an infinitely happy life to gain, a chance of gain against a finite number of chances of loss, and what you stake is finite. And so our proposition is of infinite force, when there is the finite to stake in a game where there are equal risks of gain and of loss, and the infinite to gain." Pascal figured most of humanity would likely wager their one life if there were only two lives to be gained, so why not wager one life in favor of the possibility of infinite lives? What is the value of one finite life when weighed against potential eternity?

Criticism of Pascal's theory was evident even during his lifetime. His detractors took Pascal to task for theorizing (according to his logic) that it wouldn't really matter on which particular God one wagered. Why simply wager on the God of the Christian faith? Why not cover all of your bases and wager in favor of other religions or even ancient pagan gods which promise the same reward? All things being equal, if moving closer toward one religion means moving in the opposite direction of others, then the probable gain in any such movement would automatically cancel itself out; so logically, the reward gained is nothing. Others characterized Pascal's rational exercise of faith "inauthentic", believing religious conversion to be a matter of the heart, not of statistical probability. According to Pascal's theory, people would wager on God strictly out of self-interest rather than an honest inquiry into discipleship.

Pascal took these and many other such criticisms in stride, stating that his theory was merely an exercise to highlight that logic was present within belief in God, not provide any quantitative or qualitative measure of religion. In his calculations Pascal merely sought to answer the claim that belief in God was irrational by proving the opposite of what many in his day assumed, that faith was actually rational and that disbelief was the more irrational of the two. "Atheism shows strength of mind," he writes. "But only to a certain degree." (*Pensées*, III, 225)

Now, I think it's safe to say that Pascal's Wager may not be for everyone. I will concede that, as with any theory, there is much to be critical of, but I do believe that the Wager stands a wonderful personal expression of faith. In many ways Pascal shows what all Christians should seek to do in their own lives of religious devotion: to bring their God-given talents and abilities to bear witness to God's kingdom. To paraphrase the Apostle Paul, for some of us those gifts take the form of teaching, for others encouragement, still for others proclamation. Pascal obviously had a talent for numbers, as well as logic and reason. He might even agree that it is logical to say that each person's experience with God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is wholly unique and we each honor God in different ways. Therefore, reason dictates that we celebrate and encourage such individual gifts of faith in our collective journey as Christ's church.

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? ... The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth." —Isaiah 40:21, 28

Grace & Peace,

George



## August Music Notes

We hope you are enjoying the special music this summer. It's a pleasure to hear such fine music from members of our community.

On August 6 we will hear more musicians from the Waynesboro Symphony String School. Susan Black, one of the founders of the Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra, will play violin. She will be joined her student, Laryn Weeks, for a double violin concerto by Antonio Vivaldi.

Back by popular demand, our resident Barbershop Quartet will regale us with two selections on August 13. Terry Crickenberger acquired a book of barbershop arrangements of hymns, so we will hear Terry, Warner Sandquist and Roger and Max Daggy sing two selections that morning at 11:00.

The wonderful Frank Kennerly will play organ for us again on August 20. Kimberlea and Roger will hear the final Tanglewood Music Center concert that day and bring Celia back to the 'boro for about a week before she goes back to school in Boston.

Since Celia will be with us on the 28th, the Daggy family will sing an anthem on the final Sunday of August. None other than Myra Chapman requested an encore by the "Von Daggy Family Singers," and we are happy to oblige!

The choir will resume singing on Sunday mornings after Labor Day. Many of the members have told us how much they're looking forward to resuming singing God's praises. In the meantime, enjoy hearing their wonderful singing in the congregation!

Roger and Kimberlea Daggy

Where you go I will go,  
and where you stay I will stay.  
Your people will be my people  
and your God my God.

Ruth 1:16

## **SESSION HIGHLIGHTS**

### **CALLED SESSION MEETING**

A Called Session Meeting was held July 9, 2017, for the purpose of examining officers-elect prior to their installation/ordination.

After a period of instruction on July 6, Rev. Chapman wrote a list of fifteen questions to propose to the new officers, the idea being they would choose one to answer in the course of the examination. Officers-elect responded with their individually prepared statements.

**MOTION:** Session affirmed the examinations of all officers-elect.

The service of installation/ordination will be held for Steve Doherty, Sandi Henderson and Jen Jones and installation for Colleen Cash, Joyce Tipton, re-elected deacon Cynthia Hoover and trustee Bill Phillips during the 11:00 worship service this date.

### **STATED SESSION MEETING**

Session held a Stated Session Meeting on July 16, 2017.

**MOTION:** Session approved the new sessional committee structure and committee assignments. Mark Henderson and Steve Doherty will co-chair the Administration & Outreach Committee which includes two sub-committees: Property and Personnel. Bill Bare will head Budget & Finance; Colleen Cash - Christian Education; Jeannie Curry - Congregational Care; Betty Dixon - Mission; Nancy Snyder - Pastoral Care; Cary Bennett - Preschool; and Joyce Tipton - Worship.

**MOTION:** Session elected Mark Henderson Commissioner to the Called Presbytery meeting on July 18. The purpose of the meeting is to hear and act on a final report of the AC, including its recommendation for the disposition of the congregation and property at Warm Springs Presbyterian Church.

Cary Bennett reported on the Preschool. Twelve one-week sessions of Summer Camp average 18 students. 32 students have enrolled for the fall: ten each in 2-year-olds and 4-year-olds and 12 in the 3-year-olds class.

Colleen Cash is working as the Administrative Assistant.

**MOTION:** Session authorized Cary Bennett, on behalf of the P&M Committee, to seek construction estimates and determine building code/permit issues to renovate the first floor of the Education Building. There is concern about present security and safety issues.

A Potluck will be held on Wednesday, August 23.

**MOTION:** Session approved informing and inviting congregation to join in providing tutoring and/or snacks several days a week to students at William Perry Elementary School who need relationships, help in subject material, and self-confidence. A plan will be developed after Labor Day. This is an attempt by the Mission Committee to reach out to the community, partnering with other regional churches to serve children and families, many who are economically disadvantaged.

**MOTION:** Betsy Ruehl was elected Clerk of Session for a one-year term.

**MOTION:** Danny Leech was elected Treasurer for a one-year term.

All Session Meetings are opened and closed with prayer.

## NOTES FROM YOUR MISSION COMMITTEE

Betty Dixon received an update on the Bagdad School from Elmarie Parker. (Elmarie spoke to our congregation last summer about her missionary work with her husband in the Middle East.) The school has a van to transport children and 100 are enrolled in preschool/kindergarten at church. They have received government permission to begin renovations on a large building on church property for an elementary school and job-training classes. The FPC Mission Committee voted to send \$1,000 from its current budget to the Bagdad School and plan to include \$1,000 for the school in its 2018 budget.

A project to provide tutoring at William Perry Elementary School after Labor Day is in the works.

\$100 has been sent to Valley Mission toward repair of the HVAC in the chapel. \$200 has been sent to support the Summerlee work mission in West Virginia.

FPC workers will provide lunch at Disciples' Kitchen, held at Second Presbyterian Church, on July 25 and August 29.

Terry Crickenberger will be the FPC representative for the local CROP Walk on Sunday, September 24. Our Food Bank served 122 people in June.



## OUR ETHIOPIAN ORPHANS

For many years First Presbyterian Church has supported the *iCARE* program sponsored through the Ethiopian Partnership of Shenandoah Presbytery. A letter from our local *iCARE* chair appeared in the July issue of this newsletter. *iCARE* = Illubador Children Agape REsponse.

In the beginning we sent \$500/child, which included a little extra above the actual schooling cost. With galloping inflation in that country we have sent \$850/child the past two years and now we're up to \$925. We agree to sponsor a particular child until his education has been completed.

Betty Dixon wrote to our two students and was pleased to receive their replies, written last March. Your editor has reproduced them, at least the gist of the messages, below. Be sure to check out the originals, as well as the fantastic Ethiopian postage stamps, posted on the bulletin board in the education wing.

Dear Betty,

As Ethiopian we didn't celebrate Love day except wedding ceremony. (Betty had sent him a Valentine.) I live in Ethiopia, Ilubador zone, Gore town. I am in grade 9 student . Except my lesson I haven't any extra work. I was born from poor family. Nowaday glory to be God I'll still breathing with your help.

I thank you to write the letter to me!

In Jesus name, Yohanis Abebe

Dear my family,

Hello! Betty how are you? I am fine thanks to God. Now I am attending my education in good way, so I expected a good score in my good exams.

I have been encouraged by your ideas which were mentioned in your letter because I learned many things from it, particularly is attending church. I also expecting the God can answer my questions which I asked him and in his time.

In addition to that to give solution to my problems....You are my father, my brother and also my mother.

I began to have confidence in my all aspects of life by thinking that God can give solution to my problems.

I am always happy when I live on this earth even if the conditions are bad because I expected that I will live in heaven with you in the Kingdom of God.

I am very eager to tell the peoples about Jesus Christ and convert them to protestantism, however there needs enough knowledge about Bibles so I will try to study about the Bibles deep for the future.....

I pray for you in my dorm and when I go to church.

Until we meet by another letter our unchangable God be with you!

Goodbye - your son in Christ, Tirfe Edosa

## FAITH & FICTION BOOK CLUB

Edie Lawrence will lead the discussion of *What Alice Forgot*, by Australian novelist Liane Moriarty, for the Faith & Fiction Book Club on Thursday, August 17. Donna Larsen will lead devotions for the meeting at 10:00 a.m. in the Parlor.

Alice Love is 29, crazy about her husband, and pregnant with her first child. Imagine her surprise when she comes to on the floor of a gym and is whisked off to the hospital to find out she's getting divorced, has three kids, and is actually 39 years old. Now Alice must reconstruct a lost decade and her life at the same time.

The best-selling full time author was born in 1966. Her books, translated in 39 languages, have resulted in over 6,000,000 sales. She lives in Sydney, Australia, with her husband, son and daughter.

*COLUMNS* Staff

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### **COLUMNS Mailing List**

Anyone unable to pick up the monthly *COLUMNS* at the Church the beginning of each month may request that the newsletter be mailed to them. Please remember to give your new address to the Church Office when you move. We do not want you to miss any of the Church news.

Just contact the Church Office (949-8366 or [church@firstpresway.com](mailto:church@firstpresway.com))

*Sermons, bulletins and many Columns articles can be found on the church website: [firstpresway.org](http://firstpresway.org)*

**Deadlines: COLUMNS:** 20<sup>th</sup> of the month    **Bulletin:** Wednesday

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month  
Summit Square Dining Room at 10:30  
Lunch at 11:30---cost to be determined

Our study is Cloud of Witnesses---The Community of Christ in Hebrews. The Letter to the Hebrews, a significant book of the Bible, is also significantly different from every other book in the Bible. Hebrews is both long and complex with thirteen chapters, so it is impossible to cover fully in nine lessons, but it is an exciting and interesting book to study. We will approach the Letter by its various themes, not by sequence, using the overall theme of "community". Each lesson will focus on that theme from a different angle.

In the Community with.....

- Lesson 1 (Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>).....Jesus Christ
- Lesson 2 (Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>).....the Living God
- Lesson 3 (Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>).....the Living Word
- Lesson 4 (Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>).....God's Messengers
- Lesson 5 (Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>).....Tradition of the Past
- Lesson 6 (Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>).....Reality of the Present
- Lesson 7 (Mar. 13<sup>th</sup>).....Hope of the Future
- Lesson 8 (Apr. 10<sup>th</sup>).....Household of Faith
- Lesson 9 (May 8<sup>th</sup>).....All the Saints

Discussion is led by Rev. Chapman.

Contact Ruth Kelley (337-2665) for 2017-2018 Horizon Study Books.

Horizon Study Books are provided free from the Jacquie Jeutter Fund.

# Preschool News

It's August, so it's Summer Camp time in the Preschool. Happily we have 20 plus children who attend as many of our 12 week summer camps as they choose through August 25<sup>th</sup>. We are averaging about 18 children per week.

In other good news, we are delighted to report the Preschool is essentially fully enrolled for the upcoming school year!

Thank you all for your continued generous support!!!





## **Breadbreakers 2017-2018**

Anne & Art Johnson- Chair  
Bill & Polly Bare  
Bruce Bosselman & Kevin Henkel  
Betty Dixon  
Steve & Sara Doherty  
Walt Flora  
Mary Frost  
Jean Hashagen  
Ann Kline  
Mary Ann Maupin  
Bill & Nancy Phillips  
Burnie & Carol Powers  
Valerie Purcell  
Warner & Linda Sandquist  
Charles Simpkins  
Mary Ultee  
Anne Wood

Connie Sachlis-Chair  
Joe Earhart & Terry Crickenberger  
Erwin & Joan Berry  
Ed Carr  
Colleen Cash  
Mark & Jean Droughman  
Phyllis Hanna  
Mark & Sandi Henderson  
Paul & Jen Jones  
Donna Larson  
Bob & Mary Scott Miller  
Joe Molenda  
Ann Nelson  
Betsy Ruehl  
Ron & Carrol Smith  
Nancy Snyder  
Earlene Templeman  
Joyce Tipton

9:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School—Barksdale Room  
11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship Service—

Sanctuary

**Thursday, August 10**

2-4p.m. Food Bank

**Friday, August 11**

5:30 p.m. Breadbreakers Donna Larson's Home

**Sunday, August 13**

8:45 a.m. Early Communion Service—

Barksdale Room

9:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School—Barksdale Room

11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship Service—

Sanctuary

2:00 p.m. Session Meeting

**Thursday, August 17**

10 a.m. Faith & Fiction Book Club

**Sunday, August 20**

8:45 a.m. Early Communion Service—Barksdale

Room

9:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School—

Barksdale Room

11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship Service—Sanctuary

**Wednesday, August 23**

5:30 p.m. Pot Luck Dinner

**Thursday, August 24**

2-4p.m. Food Bank

**Sunday, August 27**

8:45 a.m. Early Communion Service—

Barksdale Room

9:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School—Barksdale Room

11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship Service—

Sanctuary

**Happy Anniversary**

8/1 Mark & Pam Hammock  
8/4 Lewis & Ruth Kelley  
8/8 Harold & Olive Prettyman  
8/12 Norm & Joyce Neufeld  
8/14 Warner & Linda Sandquist  
8/17 Richard & Jeannie Curry  
8/23 Bill & Nancy Phillips  
8/31 Ron & Carrol Smith

**Happy Birthday**

8/3 Lily Tichenor  
8/10 Bob Miller  
8/13 Craig Cavanaugh  
8/16 Nancy Hypes  
8/25 Lillian Hryshkanych  
8/26 Tom Bellamy

**August Food Bank Item**

Peanut Butter and Jelly

