

THE COLUMNS

April 2022, Volume 60, Issue 4

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.*

 *We all die.*

*The goal isn’t to live forever.*

*the goal is to create something that will.*

– Chuck Palahniuk,

former diesel mechanic; freelance journalist; novelist

Last month, I was cautiously optimistic following the congregational discussion about the future. There were many astute observations made, and what seemed like a consensus about the next steps in your process of discernment. But of course, many folks were not there, and in the intervening days and weeks, a variety of alternative suggestions have circulated, conclusions have been drawn, and misinformation has spread - not just in and among the FPC family, but among families in the Preschool, across the street to the Baptist Church, up the road to Westminster, and beyond into the Waynesboro community. Friends, this is a distraction, one that consumes both energy and goodwill, and can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies of doom for a church. Let's look at where things stand, and how we plan to figure out what comes next.

Here is a simplistic but helpful chart describing the life cycle of a congregation:



YOU ARE HERE,

(MORE OR LESS)

Now, the thing about charts like this is they are general by their nature, and don't profess to represent how long each cycle might last, any more than a doctor can accurately predict how long any of us will live - even those of us with terminal diagnoses; could be months; could be years; could be decades. Just because you as a congregation have begun to come to grips with the truth of the church's life cycle does NOT mean the demise of FPC must be imminent. As a matter of fact, the focus on identifying and ensuring FPC's legacy in the community may well help to improve (and even extend) the life of the congregation. Mark my words: FPC will close, someday - every church closes, someday. But it will not close today, or tomorrow, and maybe not for a long while. That is for God to decide, and for the session and congregation to discern.

Speaking of discernment, there is another thing it is important for you to keep in mind: The session has the difficult task of leading this next phase of the discernment process. They have clearly heard from many of you the desire to continue worship, fellowship, and service in this place, and must balance that with the realities of maintenance and upkeep for an aging facility, and the decreasing energy level of members.

THIS WILL NOT BE NOT EASY. It will require a great deal from each Ruling Elder, in terms of energy, intelligence, imagination, love - and *time.* In the short term, it means many conversations must remain *confidential.*

There is a world of difference between *secrecy* and *confidentiality. Confidentiality* within a session breeds trust among its members and encourages healthy relationships within a congregation. It encourages the free exchange of ideas and empowers elders to incorporate many points of view in their decisions. It fosters accountability that builds up people and strengthens relationships. *Secrecy,* on the other hand, views information as a commodity or weapon, fostering fear, anxiety, mistrust, gossip, and dysfunction in both session and congregation. It shuns accountability in favor of power and is the soil in which untruths can flourish, hampering our ability to come before God and allow the Spirit to move in our midst.

During this crucial time, the Session will be meeting, not only to do the business of the church, but to discuss how to flesh out the congregation's hopes for the future. Many of the meetings will be confidential, not because there are secrets to be kept, but because each elder must be free to share without fear of judgement or misinterpretation. Rest assured, the session will present to the congregation every plan it considers viable, and every decision that effects the future of First Presbyterian Church. In the meantime, keep the session, congregation, and me in your particular prayers.





 **APRIL MUSIC NOTES**

There is nothing like April in Virginia, with the multitude of bird songs mingling to create nature’s symphonic chorus. The flowers bursting forth, from the ground through the branches of the trees, bring welcome color and fragrance to this season of renewal.

We are blessed to receive the gift of rebirth through Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice, celebrated during Passion Week and culminating on Easter Sunday. This month, the music will reflect that journey, beginning with Paul Jones singing on 3 April. The anthem for the first Sunday of the month will be *I Want Jesus to Walk with Me.* The source of the tune remains unclear. One researcher points to Appalachia as the source of the song. In the *Dictionary -Handbook to Hymns for the Living Church,* author Don Hustad states that the song “…may have its roots in early nineteenth century camp meetings that were attended by Native American, African Americans and Euro/Anglos.” But Carl P. Daw’s research for *Glory to God: A Companion* states that a variation of the spiritual appeared in the 1929 publication *Old Songs Hymnal: Word and Melodies from the State of Georgia.* The spiritual was also part of the early repertoire of the Fisk Jubilee Singers for their performances in the late nineteenth century.

Palm Sunday falls on 10 April, and we will cheer Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem with three songs of Hosanna. The service will open with *Hosanna, Loud Hosanna* and conclude with *Ride On! Ride On in Majesty!* The anthem will be a popular hymn from the Moravian tradition. The *Hosanna Anthem* was set in 1783 by Christian Gregor (1723-1801). It is one of over 300 hymns penned by the Moravian bishop and composer, also known as the Father of Moravian Music. The hymn is sung antiphonally, an 18th century Moravian “call and response,” if you will!

The service for Maundy Thursday, on 14 April, will include the hymn *Ah, Holy Jesus.* This paraphrase of Christ’s passion was translated from German to English by Robert Seymour Bridges (1844-1930), the Poet Laureate of England from 1913 until his death some seventeen years later.

Easter falls on 17 April, when we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus. Scores of celebratory hymns have been penned for this most joyous time in Christendom, and we will sing many of them over the course of Eastertide. On Easter Sunday, the service will open with *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today* and conclude with *The Day of Resurrection.* The Sanctuary will be filled with the scent of Easter lilies and the congregation raising its voice in fervent praise of the Risen Lord!

The triumphant hymns continue on the final Sunday of April, with *The Strife is O’er* and *Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks.* Paul Jones will sing the anthem, *Because He Lives,* an ideal song for this most jubilant time of year.

We are so grateful to the congregation at First Presbyterian Church for the consistent support of the music program. May we all continue to receive the blessings of Christ during this Easter season.

Roger and Kimberlea Daggy

**WHAT NOW?**

**7 helps for discerning God’s leading in a changing season**

Am I still on the right path? Am I spending time on what’s important? Is it steady as she goes, or time for a course correction?

 These questions may sound familiar. If you find yourself in a changing season, where-is-God-leading-me questions may be showing up in your prayers and wonderings.

 Maybe the trail that started off clearly marked is growing more indistinct and threatens to disappear altogether. Maybe the big project is finally done, and suddenly a scary emptiness looms. Maybe the way you last put your life together is showing signs of strain.

 What now?

 My current questions about God’s leading arise from a recent change in my presbytery responsibilities.

 First serving as moderator of the search committee for a team of executives to be shared with two other presbyteries, and then working as the moderator for the commission charged with shepherding the shared vision and the shared staff and the shared budget – these were big jobs and lots of hours.

But as the calendar turned, the leadership role rotated to a new moderator. I get to serve the final year of my term as a commission member. This is an important role, but one requiring much less time and energy.

 What am I to make of the lighter load? Should I see it as a catch-your-breath pause before returning to presbytery heavy lifting? Or could it be an invitation to step back and leave room, maybe for something else?

 It feels like I’ve been galumphing through the forest with a canoe on my shoulders, colliding with tree after tree, only to suddenly emerge to the sight of a still lake and open sky.

 How will God’s call shape my life in the coming year? I imagine that vintage oracle, the Magic B-Ball, answering, “Reply hazy, try again.” Trying again suggests the need for discernment, a good church word for figuring out where God might be leading.

**Helps for Discernment**

Here are seven discernment helps I’m deploying in my changing season. You’re welcome to borrow any and all, or draw from your own list.

1. Am I melting the block of ice I’m sitting on, or is the ice freezing me solid?
2. What am I talking about when the people around me see me light up?
3. Are there gifts God has given me that are asking for more playing time?
4. Are there things I am good at that are causing carpal tunnel from overuse?
5. Is God shining a light on what could be my next step?
6. Do I need to reallocate my attention and my time to honor the most important things?
7. Am I picking up any holy nudges, whispers of the Spirit, visions of what could be?

Discernment underway, I’m not rushing to fill up my emptier calendar and inbox. Maybe one grace of this time is space to breathe, to decompress. Even to enjoy God, as the Westminster Shorter Catechism teaches.

Think I’ll start there and see what unfolds.

 --Rev. Ken Rummer, retired PC(USA) Teaching Elder



[According to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees](https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2022/3/621deda74/unhcr-mobilizing-aid-forcibly-displaced-ukraine-neighbouring-countries.html) (UNHCR), the situation is on pace to become Europe’s largest refugee crisis this century with more than 660,000 having already fled Ukraine to neighboring countries. All neighboring countries are keeping their borders open to Ukrainian refugees.

Leaders in [Presbyterian World Mission](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/world-mission/) and [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](https://pda.pcusa.org/) (PDA) met to discuss the situation and how the church can respond to the growing refugee crisis, as well as the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. The conversation focused on the unfolding situation within Ukraine and in bordering countries who are receiving refugees and carrying emergency supplies over the border into Ukraine as the situation there deteriorates.  Mission co-workers shared information received from partners in the Central European region. PDA’s Office for Refugees and Asylum is coordinating internally and with these partners in the area and ACT Alliance to determine where funds can be directed for the greatest impact.

“The present crisis in Ukraine demonstrates how important it is that our Church maintains strong relationships across the ecumenical, interfaith and humanitarian landscape *before* an emergency erupts,” PDA Director the Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus says. “Through trusted partners in and beyond the Reformed Church family we share across the region, we are able to demonstrate solidarity with refugees and displaced persons through immediate gifts to the communities leading relief work and receiving refugees.”

“In the midst of the chaos, there are sibling churches and ecumenical partners who are already providing assistance with basic items for survival,” Krehbiel said. “Our first priority as PDA is to provide funding to these partners on the ground.  While the scale of this crisis is new, receiving refugees from Ukraine and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe is not, which means we have trusted, established partners with the knowledge and expertise to carry out this important work.”

While some refugees may find their way to the United States, Krehbiel and others say they expect most refugees will settle in neighboring countries with hopes of returning home.

Krehbiel said, “As we pray for an end to this violence, we ask the U.S. government and our European allies to make a commitment to the Ukrainian people for a peaceful solution.  We don’t know how long it will take, but we know that they will need help with the rebuilding of their country so that those who are fleeing now may one day return home safely.”

*Give to*[*One Great Hour of Sharing*](https://pma.pcusa.org/donate/make-a-gift/gift-info/OG999999/)*to enable Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to respond quickly to catastrophic events.*





**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING**

**Easter Sunday, April 17, 2022**

The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering will be taken on Easter Sunday, April 17. Envelopes will be available in the pews. Checks should be made out to First Presbyterian Church with a OGHS notation. For your convenience checks may be sent to the Church Office any time during the month of April, preferably sooner rather than later.

 **Why is the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering important?** This Offering is shared by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program and Self Development of People. **It gives us readiness to respond when a crisis comes up.** The church may not be the first one in, but we are often the last one out.

 At this time PDA is working alongside partners in the region near the Ukraine, including Lutheran World Federation, Hungarian Interchurch Aid and a number of other organizations who know how to get the work done with refugees. They know how to partnership with locals so they can get the aid where it’s needed. There’s food in Europe. There’s clothing available in Europe. We don’t need to ship those things from the USA.

For over 70 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has provided Presbyterians a way to share God’s love with our neighbors in need around the world. **Please give generously this Easter.**



**HIGHLIGHTS OF**

**192nd Meeting of the Shenandoah Presbytery Highlights**

**February 26, 2022**

The new moderator was installed, Teaching Elder David Howard from

Strasburg PC.

During worship Ruling and Teaching Elders in our presbytery who died in

2021 were remembered.

The Halltown Church asked for help in closing as the congregation has

dwindled; an AC was elected to help them with the task.

The ongoing mission work of the Craigsville congregation was shared.

A new worshipping community has been set up in Martinsburg, WV –

 a coffee shop and worship center.

Presbytery voted unanimously to sell the current presbytery offices and land, which have been on the market

for years, to the city of Harrisonburg for the purpose of using it for a year-round low barrier homeless shelter.

The Presbytery staff will be moving to a site at Massanetta Springs.

 ----Bronwen Boswell, General Presbyter & Betsy Ruehl

**SESSION HIGHLIGHTS**

Session held a Stated Meeting on March 8, 2022. All Session meetings and opened and closed with prayer.

* FPC was invited to meet with representatives from Glen Kirk, Hermitage, Smyrna, Second and Westminster to discuss the possibility of future endeavors together, in particular growing collaboration and partnership in mission.
* FPC was invited to join other downtown churches at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church for their traditional Palm Sunday service preceding each church’s individual worship. The service will be held outside at 10:15.
* Custodian Caroleia Strandburg resigned March 27.
* Session approved removing the COVID-19 mask mandate on church property.
* Session discussed “goings on” at the Congregational Meeting February 20. It acknowledged the letter sent to the congregation by Danny Leech with his plan of action for the church. Of primary concern is identifying church leaders – one ruling elder immediately and three elders to take office in June.
* Session is exploring 1) a legacy regarding preschool, hunger efforts, music and arts, and senior living, 2) assets – buildings/grounds assessment and repair schedule, and 3) pastoral – Nominating Committee and PNC.
* Preschool is taking applications for summer and fall.
* Session dissolved the CAT Team, with thanks.
* Session endorsed Roger Daggy’s restarting First Friday Organ Concerts beginning April 1.

 --Betsy Ruehl



**SEASON OF EASTER**

Easter isn’t just a Sunday – it’s a season. One day out of 365 is hardly sufficient to celebrate the great mystery of our faith – that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. Accordingly, the season of Easter lasts seven weeks (a “week of weeks”), spanning the 50 days from the Sunday of the Resurrection to Pentecost Sunday and encompassing the festival of the Ascension of the Lord.

The season of Easter is intended to be a joyful time for celebrating the presence of the risen Christ in the church. The Lord’s Supper is one such celebration.

Of course, Easter really isn’t just a season either, in the fullest sense. Easter is a new way of life – in which we are “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom: 6:11), called to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). Every year, for fifty days, the church celebrates and rehearses this new way of life in the Season of Easter – as we await its completion in the fullness of Christ’s reign.



 April 14, 2022, Noon

 Simple Meal - Barksdale Room

 Communion will be served

**UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2022-23**

 Once again First Presbyterian Church will offer financial support for the continuing education

 of worthy students in our community. Scholarships from the Church’s Memorial Educational

 Fund are available for undergraduate, vocational training and nursing students. Some funds are

 available specifically for students pursing teaching or religious careers. Applications will be available

 in the Church Office and on the Church website on Monday, April 4, 2022.

 A Scholarship Selection Committee selects recipients each year for varying awards depending on

 funding availability and the number of applications received. Scholarships are awarded as grants,

 not loans.

 APPLICATION DEADLINE: The Selection Committee must receive completed applications and

 all support information from applicants no later than Friday, April 29, 2022. Applicants must also

 submit copies of their most recent high school or college transcripts with their applications.

 Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

 If you have questions, please email Holly Bennett at hollybbennett@outlook.com









 March was loaded with fun and games. The

 leprechaun escaped our searches, but the pot

 of gold was captured.

 We are looking forward to Easter, egg hunts,

 and the long-awaited SPRING BREAK.







 Birthdays

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**Church Office Hours**

Monday-Wednesday

8 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Thursday

8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**Interim Pastor**

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pspettit@gmail.com

**Administrative Assistant**

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**Music Associate**

Mrs. Kimberlea Daggy

kimberleadaggy@gmail.com

**Audio/Visual Technician**

Mr. Craig Cavanaugh

**Maintenance Technician**

Mr. Michael Griffith

April 2 Ann Bryant

April 8 Ann Nelson

April 10 Cynthia Hoover

April 23 Cary Bennett

April 28 Mary Scott Miller



 **Friday, April 1**

 **12:15** PM First Friday Concert with light lunch

**Sunday, April 3**

11:00 AM Worship Service

 **Wednesday, April 6**

12:00 PM Lenten Book Study - Barksdale Room

**Thursday, April 7**

6 - 8 PM Food Bank

**Sunday, April 10 Palm Sunday**

11:00 AM Worship Service

 **Tuesday, April 12**

 3:00 PM Session Room 212

**Thursday, April 14**

 12:00 PM Maundy Thursday/Lunch Barksdale Room

 2 - 4 PM Food Bank

**Sunday, April 17 Easter**

 11:00 AM Worship Service

**Wednesday, April 20**

 7-10 PM Waynesboro Symphony

**Thursday, April 21**

 6 - 8 PM Food Bank

**Sunday, April 24**

 11 AM Worship Service

 3 PM Waynesboro Symphony Concert

**Thursday, April 28**

 2- 4 PM Food Bank

***PRAYER FOR EASTER***

*Holy One, you have made us witnesses to the good news of the gospel—*

*that Jesus Christ, our flesh and bone, is risen from the dead.*

*Open our minds to understand these things,*

*and let your word be fulfilled in us*

*so that we my share the bread of life with a hungry world;*

*through Jesus Christ, our peace.*