



First
Presbyterian
Church
of Waynesboro, Virginia

The Columns *Online*

August 24, 2022 | Waynesboro, Virginia | *a newsletter supplement*

Frederick Buechner dies at age 96

The popular Christian 'writer's writer' and 'minister's minister' died in his sleep August 15

(RNS) — Frederick Buechner was asked on numerous occasions how he would sum up everything he had preached and written in both his fiction and nonfiction. The answer, he said, was simply this: “Listen to your life.”

That theme was constant across more than six decades in his career as a “writer’s writer” and “minister’s minister” — an ordained evangelist in the Presbyterian Church (USA) who inspired Christians across conservative and progressive divides with his books and sermons. *Continued*



Buechner.

Worship Info for August 28

The organ voluntaries for this week (that is, the prelude, special music and postlude) are all from the suite, *Premiere Ton*, by Louis-Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749). This French composer was part of a musical family; his father was a musician and two of his sons followed in his footsteps. In addition to organ, Clérambault also played violin and harpsichord. He eventually became titular organist at St. Sulpice in Paris and directed the music program at the royal house of St. Cyr. Clérambault composed scores of works, including more than 25 secular cantatas (many based on Greco-Roman myths), dance pieces for harpsichord and suites for of organ. This week's music was intended to be played during church services, as their brief length is ideal for interludes during liturgies.



Clérambault.

Frederick Buechner dies, continued

Born Carl Frederick Buechner on July 11, 1926, in New York City, he moved frequently with his family in his early childhood as his father searched for work, settling in Bermuda after his father's death by suicide when he was 10. His studies at Princeton University were interrupted by World War II, but he completed his bachelor's degree in English in 1948. He quickly achieved fame with the 1950 publication of his first novel, "A Long Day's Dying."

When his second novel, in his own words, "fared as badly as the first one had fared well," he moved to New York City to lecture at New York University and focus on his writing. It was in New York City that he had an experience that changed the course of his life and work: He began attending Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. Growing up, neither side of his family had a "church connection of any kind," as he put it, but he went because he happened to live next door and "because I had nothing else to do on a Sunday," he recounted in a video posted on YouTube by the Frederick Buechner Center.

Liturgist this week: Betsy Ruehl
Scripture lessons: Proverbs 25:6-7
Luke 14:1, 7-12
Sermon: The best seat in the house.

One Sunday he was struck by a particular turn of phrase by the church's pastor, the Rev. George Buttrick: "Christ is crowned in the hearts of those who love him and believe in him amidst confession and tears and great laughter."

He recounted: "I was so taken aback by 'great laughter' that I found the tears springing to my eyes." *Continued*

Frederick Buechner dies, continued

He later told Buttrick he wanted to learn more about Christianity, to more than simply join the church. The pastor pointed the young writer to Union Theological Seminary — with some misgivings. Buechner quoted Buttrick in his autobiography “The Sacred Journey” as saying, “It would be a shame to lose a good novelist for a mediocre preacher.”

Buechner graduated with a bachelor’s of divinity — he’d later receive nine honorary degrees — and was ordained as an evangelist in 1958 at the same church where he had been so moved by Buttrick’s words. That same year, he launched the religion department at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, where he taught for nine years before moving with his family to their farmhouse in Vermont. He later was awarded lectureships at Harvard and Yale universities and held teaching positions at Tufts University, Calvin College and Wheaton College.

In 2016, Princeton Theological Seminary President Craig Barnes launched the Buechner Writing Workshop at the seminary, calling Buechner a “minister’s minister.”

Over the course of his life, Buechner wrote nearly 40 books across a number of genres: fiction, autobiography, theology, essays and sermons.

Listening to one’s life became a theme in his work, because, he said in a 1989 appearance on the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, if there was a God and if God were as concerned with the world and involved in it as Christianity says, then surely one of the most powerful ways God speaks to people is in what happens to them.



Buechner.

That’s something bestselling memoirist Anne Lamott, who wrote the introduction to the 2016 book “Buechner 101,” has said she took away from Buechner’s writing. It gave her the confidence, after paying attention to her own life, “to share that with my readers and to trust that that is ultimately all we have to share with one another — is our truth in our very own voice,” she has said.

While Buechner was ordained in a progressive mainline Protestant denomination, his fans also included Catholics and conservative evangelicals. Russell Moore, the former head of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission who recently was named editor in chief of Christianity Today, credited Buechner’s writing with making him a better evangelical in a 2017 commentary for the magazine.

“J. Gresham Machen and Carl F. H. Henry taught me that I needn’t put my mind in a blind trust in order to follow Jesus. Buechner taught me the same about my imagination,” Moore wrote.

Buechner, who split his time between Vermont and Florida, is survived by his wife, Judith Buechner, three daughters, a son-in-law and 10 grandchildren.



The Big TRAINING Event

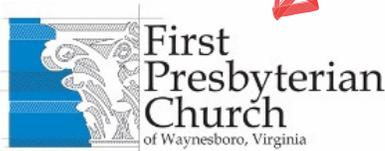
Saturday, September 10, 2022, 8:30 am—3:00 pm
Massanetta Springs Conference Center
Cost \$20

8:30–9:30	Registration in Stewart Hall
9:30–9:45	Welcome and Announcements
9:45–10:30	Workshop A: choose one A1 Clerk of Session training - How are minutes best and properly recorded? What needs to be included in the Session minutes? Minutes of other meetings? Annual report? Led by Rev. Bronwen Boswell, Stated Clerk and General Presbyter, Shenandoah Presbytery A2 Treasurers' training - What are the duties of a Treasurer of a congregation? How do I record/transmit transactions? What information do I share with the Session and the congregation, and how? What are best financial practices? Led by Heather Carter, Funds Administrator, Shenandoah Presbytery
10:30–10:45	Break
10:45–11:45	Worship with Celebration of the Lord's Supper
12:00–1:00	Lunch in Massanetta Dining Room
1:15–2:00	Workshop B: choose one B1 Serving as a Commissioned Ruling Elder - A discussion of the process, joys, and growing edges for CREs- either already serving in a commission or preparing for one. Facilitated by Rev. Dr. Bob Osborne. B2 PW 2022-2023 Horizon's Bible Study: Celebrating Sabbath - An overview of the Horizons Bible Study, written by Rev. Dr. Carol M. Bechtel. Led by Rev. Dr. Nancy Meehan Yao
2:00–2:15	Break
2:15–3:00	Workshop C: choose one C1 The Ministry of Ruling Elders - In our baptism, we have received the Holy Spirit, which equips us for ministry. The ministry of the Ruling Elder is foundational to our understanding of life in the Presbyterian Church. This training is for elders both seasoned and new. Led by Rev. Bronwen Boswell and Rev. Dr. Nancy Meehan Yao C2 Mission and Evangelism: best practices for today - What are best mission practices? How can we join in what God is already doing in the world, seeking co-development and companionship? Led by Cindy Corell, PC(USA) Mission Co-Worker to Haiti
3:00	Closing Prayer

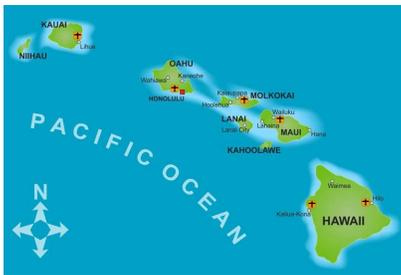
To register, [click here](https://shenpres.org/registrations) or go to our website at: <https://shenpres.org/registrations>

Our Worship Channels

click on the logos



This Week in History.



Hawaii becomes 50th state.
August 21, 1959



Composer Claude Debussy born in St. Germain-en-Laye, France.
August 22, 1868



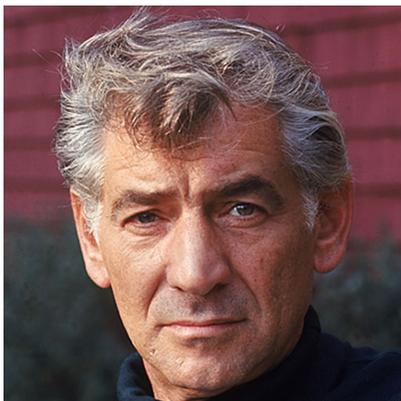
British forces invade Washington, D.C.
burning many public buildings.
August 24, 1814



Mt. Vesuvius erupts, destroying the towns of Pompeii,
Herculaneum and Stabiae.
August 24, 79



Krakatoa erupts, killing at least 36,417, and
destroying two-thirds of the island
in the Dutch East Indies.
August 26, 1883



Composer Leonard Bernstein
born in Lawrence, KS.
August 25, 1918



Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu born in
Skopje, Yugoslavia. She became a
nun, taking her final vows in 1937
under the name *Mother Teresa*, and
founded the Missionaries of Charity
in Calcutta.
August 27, 1910



Lyndon Baines Johnson born n
ear Stonewall, TX.
August 27, 1908