



First
Presbyterian
Church
of Waynesboro, Virginia

The Columns *Online*

October 18, 2023 | Waynesboro, Virginia | *a newsletter supplement*

Let's be honest

*about the decline of mainline religion —
and the truth that God is still present and active.*

BY REBECCA GRESHAM. Honesty is the number one tool current church leaders can use to equip future leaders. In seminary, I was trained to serve two churches: the church in its prime from the 1950-60s and the church of the future, or the church we hoped would be the future. A handful of years later, I serve neither of these churches.

Instead, I am working in a reality that seminary did not prepare me for — the church in transition. I came into my first call excited and ready to serve the church of the future. I was ill-prepared to bring the church into a future where we are not at the center of culture. That is a much different job that requires considerably more patience and an entirely different skill set.

I suspect we might better prepare our clergy leaders of the future if we were honest about where the church stands and our abundant hope that God continues to use God's people. Of course, we see this wishful thinking beyond seminaries. It is throughout the church. I do not believe we are purposefully deceptive about where we stand. It is something more like denial ... like we cannot bear to investigate the reality in which we sit.

Sit through almost any church meeting and you will hear people voice a desire to grow and many theories as to why that growth is not happening: We just need young families... We just need a young pastor In my role as a member of my presbytery's Committee on Ministry, I often hear about the problems facing churches, but there are rarely tangible solutions (Young families and/or a young pastor don't often fix what is changing). Maybe the answer is we just don't know.,,, continued

Let's be honest, continued

It is time for many of us to speak the truth: the budget is tight, membership is declining, we are scared to lose something we hold so dear, and we do not know what the future holds. While we might like to have young families or some other “ace in the hole” type fix, none have come to fruition. What we may really need is patience, prayer, and a reminder that amid such decline and fear, God is present. God could very well be doing a new thing in our midst, calling us once again to reform. To grow into the church God desires us to be. That growth likely will not be in membership but in our own faith journeys.

God hasn't given up on us. Speaking the truth will not chase God away but perhaps invite us into some discomfort that will be nutrient-rich for our individual and communal spiritual growth. God is working in us and through us. Let us slow down, let go of fear, and see it. The church of the future needs leaders who can navigate this and to do so we ought to start setting the example now.



Rebecca Gresham is pastor at Faith Presbyterian Church in Medford, New Jersey. Outside of church and family life, you can find her in nature, finding fun ways to be creative or asking awkwardly deep questions of people she just met.

RE•FORMATION THEN • NOW ALWAYS

Sunday, October 29

We will celebrate Reformation Sunday
with our sisters and brothers at

Second Presbyterian Church

133 North Delphine Avenue

Worship begins at 11:00

Covered Dish Luncheon to follow

Just drop your dishes off in the kitchen.



IN MEMORIAM

RICHARD LLOYD HUFF

DIED OCTOBER 13, 2023

THERE WILL BE A MEMORIAL GATHERING
FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20

2:00-4:00 PM.

THE STONE ROOM, CARNEGIE HALL

611 CHURCH STREET

LEWISBURG WEST VIRGINIA 24901

A TOAST TO DICK WILL BE AT 2:30PM.

RUBY MCCORMICK SCHWAB

DIED JULY 28, 2023 AT AGE 102.

SHE WAS CREMATED AND BURIED

IN HER FAMILY PLOT IN LEXINGTON.

OUR WORSHIP CHANNELS

CLICK ON THE LOGOS



WORSHIP THIS WEEK:

PSALM 96: 1-13

MATTHEW 22: 15-22

SERMON: 'OBLIGATIONS'





BETTER TOGETHER

Bible Study

**MONDAY,
OCTOBER 16**

**HERMITAGE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

1:00-2:00 p.m.

**COME OUT AND JOIN
WESTMINSTER'S DCE, JOHN TINDALL,
AND EXPLORE TOGETHER
THE GREAT STORIES
AND THEMES OF THE BIBLE.**

This Week in History.



Lido Anthony "Lee" Iacocca is born in Allentown, PA. He started his career as a mechanical engineer at Ford, before moving to Sales & Marketing, where he was instrumental in the creation of the Mustang and the Pinto. In 1978, he would lead Chrysler's resurgence, arranged a federal bailout and introducing the minivan. He would later serve as foundation chairman for the rehabilitation of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

OCTOBER 15, 1924



The Collegiate School of Connecticut is founded in Killingworth, CT; it would move to New Haven in 1716. Two years later, the name was changed to Yale College to honor philanthropist Elihu Yale. In 1886, it became Yale University.

OCTOBER 16, 1701



The largest naval battle in history begins in the **Leyte Gulf**, off the Philippine Islands. The battle involved 216 U.S. warships and 64 Japanese ships and resulted in the destruction of the Japanese Navy, including the Japanese Battleship *Musashi*, one of the largest ever built.

OCTOBER 17 - 25, 1944



King Louis XIV revokes the **Edict of Nantes**, thus depriving French Protestants of all religious and civil liberties granted by Henry IV in 1598. This would lead to widespread Huguenot persecution and subsequent migration to the Carolinas.

OCTOBER 18, 1685



Beset by a seriously eroding economy, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev wins parliamentary approval to switch to a market economy.

OCTOBER 19, 1990

OCTOBER 20, 1818

The United States and Great Britain agree to set the U.S.-Canadian border at the **49th parallel**.



Thomas Edison successfully tested an **electric incandescent lamp** with a carbonized filament at his laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey, keeping it lit for over 13 hours.

OCTOBER 21, 1879