



From the Pastor

Dear friends,

Tomorrow, March 1, is Ash Wednesday. This day marks the beginning of Lent as we come together to remember who we are as people of God fully dependent upon God for the fullness of grace in our lives and for the mercy we seek.

Lent has oft been associated with repentance, fasting, and prayer. We know Lent as a time of preparation during which we recognize who God is as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, and who we are as God's people in need of God's love and grace in Christ Jesus. For some, however, Lent has become a dark time of guilt, remorse and metaphorical self-flagellation. I do not, however, believe that this was the intention of this season. As one writer puts it, "we ought to approach Lent as an opportunity, not a requirement!"

After all, it is meant to be the church's springtime, a time when, out of the darkness of sin's winter, a repentant, empowered people emerges. . . . Put another way, Lent is the season in which we ought to be surprised by joy. Our self-sacrifices serve no purpose, unless, by laying aside this or that desire, we are able to focus on our heart's deepest longing: unity with Christ. In him – in his suffering and death, his resurrection and triumph – we find out truest joy.[1]

As we prepare to enter this season, I encourage you all to find a way to celebrate this season, either through adding to your day an additional period of prayer or meditation, a Lenten devotional time, an act of service in the community, or a period of fasting (from food or something else) that includes Scripture and prayer. Make worship, study and time with the community of faith a part of your weekly discipline as well. Remember that such disciplines are not focused on you and what you are doing or sacrificing; rather they are vehicles of grace which invite you to deepen your relationship with Christ and bring you closer to that deepest longing of your heart.

May God be with us all as we journey through this season together.

Grace and peace to you all,
Mindy

[1] Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), xvi-xvii.



Two services to mark Ash Wednesday



Ash Wednesday is the gateway into Lent, a season for Christians traditionally to prepare for baptism and to be restored to wholeness by penitence and forgiveness. Lent begins on March 1 this year, and continues for 40 days until it culminates in Holy Week and Easter Sunday on April 16.

Here at FPC, we will begin with the imposition of ashes in the Memorial Garden with a brief Ash Wednesday Service on March 1 at noon, and a longer service at 6 p.m. followed by a light dinner. These services invite us to remember that the whole Christian

community, worldwide, stands in need of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and in the need to renew our faith. They also remind us that we are never alone; that we are joined by the company of believers, past, present and future, as we journey together towards Resurrection Day/Easter Sunday. Come, let us walk with Jesus through the wilderness days towards hope and resurrection.



Added this week:

- Don and Gail Champion, uncle and aunt of Lenore Champion
- Dell McMillian, brother-in-law of Valerie McMillian
- Sandra Russell, frequent visitor to FPC
- Family of Alonza Lloyd (Alonza is the spouse of one of Nancy Kost's coworkers. He died February 25)

Sarah and Pete Finbow Nancy Kost Terry Weaver Carolyn Wolfe

Brookdale Senior Living (Durham): Julian Boswell
Eno Pointe Assisted Living (Durham): Helen Garrison
Croasdaile Village: Joanne Harrar, Betty Jelstrup, Bob Keever, Bob Rankin
Forest at Duke: Fran Bryant, Ken Goldner, Peaches McPherson

Family and friends of FPC Members:

- Doug Fisher, frequent visitor
- Cherie Haines, sister of Vernon Neece
- Paul Martin, brother of Beth Neece
- John McKey, husband of Al and Judy Arrowood's former pastor
- Danny Parker, father of Al and Judy Arrowood's daughter-in-law
- Margaret Pfeiler, grandmother of Julie Maxwell
- Roberta Post, friend of Jeanne Hervey
- Janice Rattray, friend of Robert and Jane Brawley

Please keep the pastoral staff updated on the progress of your friends and loved ones. Thank you.

Notes from February Session Meeting

The Session had one goal for its February meeting on Monday night (February 27): to approve a budget for 2017. Pledge income was not what was hoped for, requiring that the proposed budget be revised. After prayer, thorough discussion, and careful consideration, the Session approved an operating budget of \$922,738. This budget is less than the \$1,023,357 proposed during the Stewardship campaign in the fall of 2016, and it relies on some use of our reserve funds. More details and information about the decision process and the budget itself will be sent in the coming weeks to all members by mail and presented at the March 19th Annual Meeting of the church.

Respectfully submitted,
Christyn Klinck
Clerk of Session

NOTES and ANNOUNCEMENTS

McPherson Lectureship: Thank you to all the fabulous bakers of First Presbyterian Church! Your desserts were all so yummy and greatly appreciated by everyone in attendance at Sunday night's McPherson Lecture with Miroslav Volf. The evening lecture was very well attended and well supplied with your treats. There were some leftovers which we decided to share with Duke Divinity School students to enjoy before Lent! Your containers will be returned to FPC on Sunday.

Grace and peace to you all,

Scottie Seawell, Chair
McPherson Lectureship Committee

Congratulations: Nathaniel Cole and Duncan Profeta, participated in the Durham Public Schools Battle of the Books on February 24. They were on the Durham School of the Arts team, which came in third out of the 12 middle schools in the competition. Way to go!

Birth Announcement: Congratulations to **Howard and Beth Eisenson** on the birth of a grandson. **Oliver Samuel Eisenson** was born February 24 to **Vince Eisenson and his wife Amal**.

Visit With our Muslim Neighbors: On February 26, seven FPC members were invited to dinner and conversation by Imam Mowlid Ali and the congregation of Jamaat Ibad Ar Rahman Masjid in south Durham. This was in response to the "peace card" which **Sue Fricks** designed and FPC delivered to them before Christmas. In his invitation, Shk. Ali said, "In the light of the negative rhetoric and recent circumstances vis a vis Muslims and other minorities, your letters have been uplifting and gratefully accepted. Thank you so much for your efforts toward a more positive future." Guests were treated to a lovely reception and dinner for about 200 people, where we heard comments of support from other faith communities, and where we met with about 20 recent refugees from Syria which the Muslim community is resettling here in Durham. It was very moving to meet those with large families who have so recently escaped from "the war," as they put it. Those who attended included **Bob Yoder, Tom and Ellen Bacon, Catherine Dumas, Julia Law, Sue Fricks** and **Marilyn Hedgpeth**. This Thursday, others are invited to a similar gathering at the North Durham Islamic Center at 2609 Carver Street., Thursday at 6:30. God is providing wonderful opportunities to meet and support our neighbors.

Immigrant Support for Iglesia Emanuel's Congregation: Last week some of our members along with two other Presbyterian leaders, met with Rev. Julio Ramirez-Eve and other leaders of Iglesia Emanuel, the Presbyterian church in Durham we have supported since its beginning over ten years ago. Julio shared an urgent need for support for the people of this community who are feeling frightened and persecuted as a result of recent news regarding immigration enforcement. In response, **Diane Standaert** (of FPC) and **Guillermo Salamea** (of IE) put together a sign-up form for those who are interested in offering support in some way. The link provided here is for any who are interested in supporting our neighbors in this way. Link: <http://bit.ly/safetyresponsesignup>



Sunday, March 5, 2017 - 1st Sunday in Lent

9:45 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Worship and Communion

***** Please don't forget *****

As a new way of extending the grace of the Lord's Table in 2017 to others beyond our walls, we are asking the congregation to bring ready-made blessing bags or supplies for blessing bags on the Sundays when communion is celebrated. Bring them into the sanctuary with you (as you do the Hunger for Change offering), and place them in the baskets as part of the communion liturgy. Blessing bags might contain: granola bars, nuts, non-perishable fruit, small bottles of water, snack crackers or cookies. Thank you for being a good neighbor.

Sermon: "Wilderness Temptations" - Mindy Douglas, preaching

Worship Texts:

Epistle Lesson: Romans 5:12-19

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 4:1-11

Serving this Sunday:

Acolytes: **Minna Fullenkamp, Laura McDow**

Crucifer: **Sophie Wilkins**

Liturgist: **Ruth Roberson**

Narthex Greeter: **Delia Kwon**

After Worship Greeters: **Phyllis Verhey** (narthex/rear),

Gray Wilson (font/side)

Ushers: **Alissa Miles, Karen Swope, Mary-Jo Keenan, Michael Honeycutt, George Danser, Miriam Morey**

Communion Elders:

Bread: **Lenore Champion** (B1, process), **George Bernhardt** (B2), **Jane**

Williams (B3), **Caroline Rourk** (B4)

Cup: **Emily Diy** (C1), **Al Arrowood** (C2, process), **Libby Gulley** (C3), **Will McDow** (C4)

Shepherds: **Barbara Buckley** (font aisle), **Gray Wilson** (center aisle), **Carter Momsen-**

Hudson (pulpit aisle)

Head/Replenish Elements: **Miriam Morey**



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Classes for children (through 5th grade) are held on the second floor of the Christian Education building at 9:45.

Middle and high school youth meet in their designated classrooms in the basement (below the sanctuary) at 9:45.

Faith & Community Class (Adults) - This Sunday we welcome back *Jay and Elinor Williams*, members at University Presbyterian Church, and both clinical social workers, recently retired from private psychotherapy practice in Chapel Hill. They will continue our discussion of mental health and the church's faithful response. This week they will address the topics of anxiety, and learning conditions such as ADHD, LD, dyslexia and autism. Those with children or grandchildren with learning conditions might be particularly interested in this presentation. The Williams promise to leave time for discussion at the end of their presentation as to how the church should faithfully respond and include those struggling with these issues. The class meets at 9:45 in **Watts-Hill Hall**. All are welcome.

Lectionary Class (Adults) - Is it sinful to seek knowledge? Is it sinful to seek the means to feed the hungry? Is it sinful to act with faith and confidence in God's protection? How easily temptation twists our noble goals into greed and selfish ambition! Join us for discussion at 9:45 in the **East Parlor**.

Journeys Class (Adults) - Journeys will continue their reading and discussion of the Book of Ezra in which the Israelites return to Zion and endeavor to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. All are welcome to join the discussion in **basement classroom B-17** at 9:45.

Scratch Class (Young Adults) - This week we'll continue our study of Lauren Winner's book, *Wearing God*, focusing on the chapter of God as laughter. See you around 9:45 on the second floor of the CE building, room 205. New faces are always welcome.

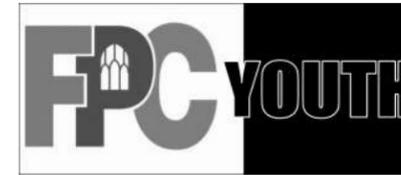
Women's Spiritual Formation - Susan Dunlap leads our discussion. This class meets in **basement classroom B-16**, at 9:45.

Membership Inquiry Class

Why church? We will reconvene this Sunday, March 5, at 9:45 in the Wilson Parlor to hear *David Smith* and *Dewey Lawson* speak about reformed worship and the liturgical year. They have a great presentation about why we do worship the way that we do in the Reformed Tradition.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

The Confirmation Class will be visiting the Judea Reform Congregation this Friday, March 3 from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. for the Shabbat Service. Mentors and teachers are invited to come with us. Please meet at Judea Reform a little before 7:00, as one of their members, Andrew Geller, will meet with us before the service to greet us and answer questions. Parents may pick up youth before 9:00 at Judea Reform. Then on Sunday, we will meet in the Education Building at 9:45 a.m. to discuss our visit, and to plan next week's visit to Hall Wynne Funeral Home. If you cannot attend this Friday's Shabbat Service, please let Marilyn know.



This Sunday evening, the youth will meet at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Durham, to hear **Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove** give a presentation, "Race and Faith." Check your email for start and end times.

Our Lenten Book Study Begins Friday, March 3 *Being Disciples: Essentials of the Christian Life* by Rowan Williams

Books will be available at both Ash Wednesday services for \$6. See Marilyn to pick up a book. (If we run out, she will order more before Sunday). Class leadership will be shared by clergy and laypersons. Classes will meet on **Wednesdays, March 8 – April 5 from 6:00-7:00 p.m.** (bring a bag dinner/childcare provided); and on **Friday mornings, March 3- April 7 from 10:30 a.m. – noon at FPC.**

Opportunities for Service and Mission

FEEDING OUR NEIGHBORS: Please continue to bring non-perishable food items for Iglesia Emanuel's food pantry and supplies for blessing and toiletry bags. **We especially need snack crackers and bottled water for the blessing bags!**

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: The church office is looking for five to six volunteers to tidy up the foyer, sanctuary, and narthex each week on a rotational basis. If you like things "decent and in order" and live nearby FPC or work downtown, we would love for you to consider fulfilling this need. Depending on your schedule, you can volunteer once or more often during the month. The tasks should take one person less than an hour to complete each week. Contact Valerie in the church office if you are interested: 919-682-5511 ext. 215 or v.mcmillan@firstpres-durham.org.

UPCOMING MEETINGS and EVENTS

FLORENCE FORTH RACE - Saturday, March 4



The race honoring our little *Florence McDow* is this Saturday, beginning at 8:00 a.m. Come and cheer on the walkers from FPC. For more information, go to the Florence Forth Road Race website: <http://florenceforth.org/>.

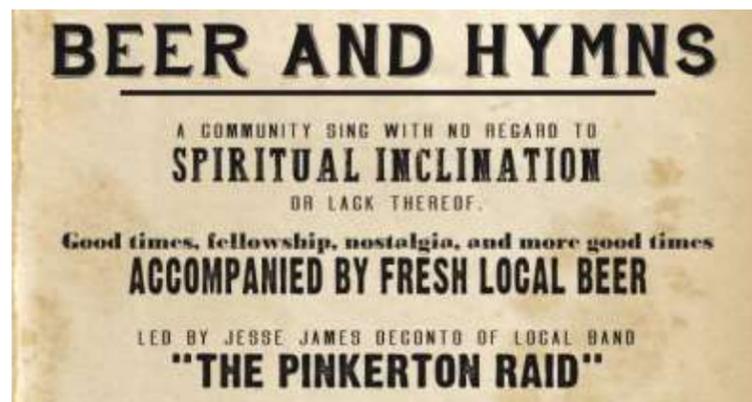
First Friends Potluck Gathering at the Carsey's home Saturday, March 11 at 6:00 p.m.

Adults only; bring a potluck; hosts providing ham biscuits
(Please respond to the EVITE)

SCRATCH / Young Adults Potluck Gathering
Saturday, March 18 at 6:00 p.m.
at the home of Ian and Jennie Belle
(Please respond to the EVITE)

*****ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CHURCH*****

The Session has set Sunday, March 19 as the date for the Annual Meeting of the church. At this meeting, members will hear a report from the Finance Committee and approve the terms of call for the pastors.



FPC is sponsoring Sunday evening's Beer and Hymns Sing at FullSteam Brewery. Join us March 5 from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. We'll be passing the hat to benefit Partners for Youth Opportunity. (<https://pyopportunity.org/>) Please visit durhamcountybeerandhymns.com for more information on this fun, fundraising event held on the first and third Sundays in the Triangle.

**YOKEFELLOW
MINISTRY**



On Monday, March 6 at 7:00 p.m., Rev. David Morton will provide education and training for Yokefellow Ministry at First Presbyterian Church. Yokefellow Prison Ministry of North Carolina is an inter-denominational Christian ministry of reconciliation begun in 1969. Its focus is on a ministry of listening, encouragement, and support from volunteers to those in prison in the form of small group meetings. This session will last one and a half hours.

After the informational session on Monday, those interested in volunteering as a Yokefellow at Orange County Correctional, a minimum prison facility near Hillsborough, will complete paperwork and training at the Peace Center at OCC on Thursday, March 9 at 6:00 p.m. This training is led by Chaplain Jerry Love. The training is required to volunteer at the prison.

If you think that you might have an interest in this new ministry, please come to the Yokefellow session to learn more about this approach. Attendance does not commit you to become a volunteer. If you would like to commit to the training at OCC, please contact **Jane Williams** (336-577-8240) or janepsych1@mac.com for further details and registration information.

Durham's Annual Crop HUNGER Walk

It's time to get our team together to walk in this year's Durham Crop Walk for hunger relief.

The 43rd Durham Crop HUNGER Walk will be Sunday, April 2, 2017 beginning at 2:30 p.m. from Duke Chapel.

Not able to walk this year? Support FPC's team by sponsoring a walker. **Please make checks payable to Durham Crop Walk and give to the person you are sponsoring by April 2.**

For more info on this event, go to the DURHAM CROP WALK website.

This year's goal is \$5000. We can reach it with your help! To sign up to walk and/or make a donation, go to this link: <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/durhamnc/Team/View/33229/First-Presbyterian-Church>.

Faith Connections on Mental Illness - 7th Annual Conference

Friday, March 31

St. Thomas More Catholic School

940 Carmichael St., Chapel Hill

Conference includes a keynote speaker, plenary lecture, and breakout sessions. Registration is required. For more information and to register, go online to: www.faithconnectionsmentalillness.org

INVITATION: Gurudwara Day - A Community Celebration

Sunday, April 2, 2017 from 11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

The Sikh Gurudwara of North Carolina (**3214 E. Banner Street, Durham**) invites the community to their annual program designed to introduce the North Carolina Sikh community to their neighbors. The Youth Representatives of Gurudwara will present speeches in English, hymns in traditional Sikh music, and a hearty Punjabi lunch at the conclusion. They would be honored by your presence. **For more details and to RSVP, please send an email to: darasjot.singh@gmail.com or darsev.kaur@gmail.com or go online to: sgncweb.org**

Durham StepUp Phase 2 begins in April. FPC is the host site for this nine month support program. For more information on the program, and how you can volunteer and be a part, go to: <http://www.stepupdurham.org/durham-blog/2017/2/27/step2-is-coming>

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305 EAST MAIN STREET, DURHAM NC 27701 919-682-5511