



THE PIPER

Piping Along News of Interest

FEBRUARY 2019

Dear Church Family,

As we enter into February, let us be reminded of God's great love story and pursuit of us as we see the plethora of Valentine's Day gifts available for purchase. As we await the return of Christ, let us be reminded of the great marriage supper of the Lamb that is to come when He comes for His bride, the Church.

Before Christ returns, God calls us to passion and purity in all of our relationships. Those who are single or engaged, are called to a life of chastity, loving Christ, and living in obedience to His Word. Those who are married are called to a life of fidelity, vitality, and love for their partner as they love Jesus, and submit to one another out of love for His Word. We are all called to a deeper, more intimate relationship with Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33).

We live in a fallen and broken world and fail to live up to God's standards. As a result, we cause undue stress and havoc to ourselves and those we love. But God's purpose for singleness and marriage involves so much more than most of us are experiencing today. Why is this so? I believe we've allowed our culture to creep into our lives, causing us to compromise our convictions and desires. We need help, and I believe God is faithful to provide it.

I believe God is calling our church to be intentional about marriage ministry. There are a lot of great books and conferences available to strengthen marriages. I've read and been a part of some of those. Recently I (and seven others from our church) experienced a unique and much needed gift and opportunity. *Marriage Dynamics* is a 9-week marriage enrichment course. I'm convinced this will help families and our church better love Christ Jesus, serve our neighbor, and grow God's Kingdom. Healthy marriages will cause couples to be better equipped to nurture and disciple their children. Healthy marriages are attractive to unbelievers. What I love about *Marriage Dynamics* is that it can have a reach similar to GriefShare, impacting couples within our church and community, believers and non-believers.

Four FPC couples have been equipped to prayerfully facilitate this course. Facilitators will listen, demonstrate humility, be nonjudgmental, and commit to helping couples experience God's abundant life in their marriages. Each class can have up to twelve couples. The cost per couple is \$100. We hope to begin April 1, 2019. The class for church and community members will meet on Thursdays, 7-9pm. The class for pastoral couples will be Monday evenings, 7-9pm. Child care will be available from 6:45 to 9:15 on both evenings. For more information contact bcraig@firstpreshbg.org. *In Christ, Billy*

More information is at: <https://marriedynamics.com/marriage-course-facilitator-training/>

Church Directory online—Coming Soon!

It has been seven years since First Pres has done a photo directory. Given our ever changing faces and ever changing times we have decided to go with an online directory service (instantchurchdirectory.com) that we can keep updated on a regular basis. We will be doing the photos in-house solely for the purpose of the online directory (not for purchase).

The Sundays of March 17 – April 14 we hope all First Pres members, participants, and families will get their photos taken! Each Sunday from 10-11:15am there will be photo stations in Showker Hall. After having your photo taken proceed to the checkout table to check the accuracy of the information that will appear in the directory and write down your photo number. We want to keep the line moving so you will not be able to review your photos, we will trust our photographers on that.



Encouragement in Cuba

As Amy and I boarded the plane to fly home this past January 5th I was left with the voice of my friend Osvaldo echoing in my head. I was only able to spend one hour with him this trip which was a bit disappointing because he has become very special to me. Thankfully, the morning of our departure he was able to come to visit us with his son, Daniel. We exchanged how the past few months had been for both of our families and Amy showed them the pictures of Anna Sophia, Magdiel and Arlenys' daughter that was born in RMH right before Thanksgiving. As they looked and smiled at the pictures Osvaldo turned to me and said "My wife and I think of you all (First Presbyterian Church) every night." The way he said it carried more meaning than just a formality so I quizzically looked at him and he elaborated. "We sleep under the quilt you gave us this past summer and we are thankful and happy that we know you every night before we go to sleep." This quote really struck me. The quilt he was talking about was a quilt made by Kerus quilters with a Bible verse stitched onto it. Osvaldo and his wife are literally covered by the words of God thanks to believers here.

Another friend we have made is Oscar, a 80 year old practicing physician in Havana. God has allowed he and Amy to build a unique relationship and it has been really neat to see it continue to evolve. Through sharing stories and laughs over the past year Amy has been able to share the Gospel and God to him. This past break Amy gave him a book of encouraging scriptures for grandparents. He was exceptionally grateful and surprised Amy with a gift of a Catholic crucifix. The gift of time and relationship is how God is working in Cuba.

Friends, God works wonders through his believers. Covenant partners and believers in Harrisonburg are spreading God's word throughout Cuba in a way that is hard to explain. These are just a couple of instances of many I can share from our trip. The ministry of presence that God has blessed Amy and me to be a part of is growing stronger and deeper in a country that is facing scarcity, oppression, and isolation.

Many of our friends there have sent their love and appreciation for members who have come to visit and for the prayers and gifts that our church has offered people in a place that often is without much hope. The hope in Christ and encouragement to believers who are sharing the Gospel with neighbors and friends is something that cannot be understated.

As we look forward to a trip deepening relationships and making new friends this March, and one this summer, we invite you all to participate in God's call to spread the Gospel. Step out in faith and join us on a trip, or pray for teams and believers in Cuba. 1 Thessalonians 2:8, "so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well." Share the most meaningful gift you can give....your love and friendship.

Your brother and sister in Christ,
Patrick and Amy Werner



Meet Elder Sue Smith

Tell us why you love First Presbyterian Church: I love this church because I love the people here. I feel we are truly brothers and sisters in Christ.

How have you seen God at work in your life? God has been my navigator throughout the many ages and stages of my life. He has kept me humble during the good times and granted me grace and peace during the darkest days of my life.

What's your greatest hope for our life together at First Pres? My hope is that we can continue to grow as a spiritual family - loving and caring for one another just as our Heavenly Father loves and cares for us.

If someone asked you to describe what being an elder is all about, what would you say? Being able to serve God in this capacity is an awesome responsibility and privilege.

Favorites: I love to read, shop, and collect antique dolls.



What is our Vision?

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The Session, your church's leadership team, and the staff of First Pres began the year on a recent Saturday by reviewing, evaluating and ultimately reaffirming both our previously developed mission statement and core values.

By way of reminder, the mission statement is "Loving Christ Jesus, Boldly proclaiming Truth, Serving our neighbor and Growing God's kingdom." Similarly our core values center on our commitment to the Bible, Worship, Relationships, Multi-generational Discipleship, Missions/Evangelism and Leading in our community. Our mission statement explains why we exist while our core values reflect who we are. In the coming months, Session will be developing a vision statement, or a succinct phrase that will communicate what kind of future we envision as a result of our mission and core values. This vision statement will help us in turn as we make goals and strategies for the future.

The retreat was an energizing time of rallying around our common mission. Session asks for your prayers as we continue to discern where God is leading us.

Local Missions: Open Doors

Engaging the community of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County in partnership with Faith Communities to provide shelter, compassionate support, and access to services weekly (November – March) for people who are homeless.

The quote, "It takes a village", is certainly appropriate in describing our host week for Open Doors. Volunteers came together to provide our neighbors in need with delicious food, loving hospitality, and a warm and safe shelter for the night. We hosted an average of 55 guests each night. The shelter provides beds for 40. Some guests come to have dinner knowing they will need to sleep elsewhere. On frigid nights, some stay and sit at the tables all night to be able to be indoors where they are warm and safe.

We are so grateful for the First Pres. volunteers! We had approximately 76 volunteers this year contributing 579.5 hours during the week. These hours include planning, setting up and taking down Showker Hall, preparing and serving meals, plus clean up in the kitchen, and staying overnight. We received generous monetary donations that enabled us to provide meals and snacks that our guests really enjoyed, especially the pizza! We were able to utilize left-over meatloaf (making sandwiches) and pizza several mornings for guests to enjoy.

There were several opportunities to connect with our guests. One man asked for a large print Bible which we were able to provide. Another guest's circumstances made us all aware of how vulnerable homelessness can be for a young woman.

Several of our volunteers were "first timers" and commented that they were initially reluctant to participate. However, after being a part of the process felt very blessed and intended to sign up next year! Many indicated just the opportunity to talk with our guests made them so much more aware of how interesting these individuals are. Each person has their story. We urge you to consider becoming a part of the Open Doors program and experience the joy of sharing the love of our Lord with those less fortunate.

We are deeply grateful to Mary Scott, Pat Haden, and the 76 volunteers who lovingly served our Neighbors in Need! Thank you so much!



"Loving Christ Jesus, Boldly Proclaiming Truth, Serving Our Neighbor, Growing God's Kingdom"

How is God moving in your heart and life this time of year? Do you have a story you'd like to share with the congregation?

Please submit it to the Piper! Contact Emily Huffman at 434-6551 or ehuffman@firstpreshbg.org



Feb 1 – Danny Evick, Alexander Davis, Caleb Landes, Cali Craig
Feb 3 – Martha Graham, Judy Gray, Tom Kuster, Kathryn Hendricksen, John Niland, Madelyn Hylton
Feb 5 – Randy Cline, Grace Edwards
Feb 6 – Scott Lemn
Feb 7 – Lila Gardner, Mark Graham
Feb 8 – Dick Brown, Judie Wine, Sallie Funkhouser
Feb 9 – Bill Cale, Anne Callahan, Rick Schlabach
Feb 10 – Peggy Allen, Chip Rothery, Ally Ortigosa
Feb 11 – Pam Simmons
Feb 12 – Judy von Seldeneck, Clay Sowers
Feb 13 – Hailey Bales, Eliza Kiser
Feb 14 – Tonia Campillo, Reese Lemn
Feb 16 – Carolyn Wetsel, Bill Boyd, Jordan Albrite
Feb 17 – Val Stapel, Daphane Stone
Feb 18 – Lou McCoy, Jack Birdsong
Feb 19 – Libby Stevens
Feb 20 – Donna Grist
Feb 21 – Emily Kubler
Feb 22 – Danny Beam, Keri Davis, Tessa Gorby
Feb 23 – Joan Krumm, Carl Larsson
Feb 24 – John Little
Feb 25 – Alex Banks
Feb 26 – Matt Muterspaugh
Feb 27 – Bill Hancock, Michael Ford
Feb 28 – Steven Floyd, Beau Saunders
Mar 1 – Dee Huffman
Mar 2 – Lila Gorby
Mar 3 – Robyn Ludwig, Debbie Price, Madelyn Hart, William Lenhart, Bekah Ramsey, Parker Langridge
Mar 4 – Ruby Callahan
Mar 5 – Sybil McCrory
Mar 6 – Steve Maguigan

We Express our Sympathy to:

Stephanie and Steve Pence in the loss of her aunt, Beverly Still, on December 14th.
Phyllis & Lanny Branner in the loss of her mother, Mrs. Janet Bollinger, on December 29th.
Loree & Scott Dove in the loss of her mother, Mrs. Shirley Horn, on December 31st.
Mike and Kathryn Hendricksen in the loss of her grandmother, Barbara Handy, on January 7th.
Karl and Barbara Stoltzfus in the loss of their nephew, Brian Stoltzfus, on January 21st.
The Gilmer family in the passing of Sandra Gilmer on January 18, 2019.



Feb 14 — Kemper and Ashleigh Funkhouser celebrate 10 years
Feb 15 — Chuck and Geri Barker celebrate 45 years
Feb 15 — Ray and Linda Ramquist celebrate 33 years
Feb 23 — Bill and Susan Cale celebrate 48 years
Feb 24 — Jim and Vicki Krauss celebrate 29 years

On the Calendar

February 3 D-Now Registration Final Deadline!
February 3 Meredith Chapel Communion Service, 2pm and week of Home Communion Visits
February 3, 10, 17, 24 Connections Classes, 10:15am-11:45am, Room 208
February 3, 10, 17, 24 Preparing Kids for Worship, 10:15-11am, Rm 225
February 16 Loss of Spouse Seminar 9:30-11am
Wednesdays February 20 – May 15 Griefshare Series
February 22-24 Disciple Now Weekend (youth)
February 23 Children's Ministry Gathering, 8:30-3:30pm
March 4-8 College Spring Break Mission Trip to NC (tentative)
March 10 - April 14 Lenten Life Groups, Theme: "Love Is..."
March 25-29 Spring Break Mission Trip to NC and Cuba
March 6 Ash Wednesday Service, 7pm
Sundays March 17-April 14 Church Directory photos, 10-11:15am, Showker Hall

Thank you to First Pres for recently making me the TLC person of the week. I very much enjoyed the cards and flowers.
Charlotte Coppock

My heartfelt thanks for the lovely bouquet and the beautiful Christmas card wishes for the season and for my well-being. I am grateful to friends, acquaintances, and even to strangers, for such "spirit-lifters". You made my week as well as my Christmas season special indeed as "TLC Person of the Week". Blessings and love, Lee Watson

Thank you for making me Person of the week. It has made me feel so special! I was on my way to pick up my mail when I ran into one of my friends. She said "It must be your birthday, your mailbox is overflowing!" It was from all the beautiful cards you sent me! The pretty yellow flowers have brightened up my living room although there is still a trace of snow outside.
Betty Hedrick