



# THE PIPER

Piping Along News of Interest

MAY 2019

Dear Church,

I am excited for May 12, 2019. Besides the fact it's Mother's Day, we'll have 10 confirmands join the church at our worship services and profess their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. One of our early church fathers said, "You can't have God as your Father without the Church as your Mother." I believe this is true. We are adopted into God's family as His sons and daughters, receive God's forgiveness, are justified, born again, rescued from hell and God's wrath, bought at a costly price, brought from death to life, made fully alive, and we are given peace, hope, and joy that we could never experience apart from Christ and His bride the Church.

The apostle Paul exhorts the young pastor of the church in Ephesus, Timothy, with these words, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). Then in verse 16 he says, "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." What we believe matters. Right doctrine should lead to a healthy and vibrant life of discipleship. These young people have much to offer the church as they lead, serve, laugh, and allow God's Spirit to control them. They have opportunities to love those in the church and in the world, with Christ's love.

Throughout our Sunday mornings in confirmation classes (parents and confirmands) we've challenged them to understand that they are a vital part of the local church fellowship with much to offer. Membership in a congregation comes with privileges and responsibilities. It's important for them to participate in the body for their own benefit and that of the whole community of faith.

In becoming covenant partners they are making vows. A vow is a serious promise not to be taken lightly. When a couple gets married, they take a vow of marriage. They promise each other, and God, that they will love and cherish one another all the days of their lives. The vows of joining a church are just as serious. When you take a vow you are essentially saying that everything within your statement is absolutely true. When you become a member of a church, you are saying that you are part of the body of Jesus Christ. This is a relationship that will continue not only for your time here on earth but for all eternity! As a congregation we will be making a vow to these new covenant partners. This will also be a great time for us to examine our own commitment to Christ and his bride. Where do you (and I) need to grow in our relationship with God so that we are being faithful disciples who are kingdom minded and others focused? May God use all of us to invite others to trust in Jesus and become a part of His Church.



*In Christ, Billy*

**First Presbyterian received a letter from the Remote Area Medical Clinic thanking us for our contributions to the clinic March 2-3.** This year the clinic was able to serve 601 individuals with 856 services totaling \$304,882 in free medical, dental, and vision care. Over 800 volunteers showed up to register patients, cook and serve volunteer meals, provide interpretation and translation services, treat hypertension and high blood sugar. Mammograms, pap smears, immunizations, and screening for HIV and Hepatitis C were provided. Full dental exams including hygiene, fillings, and extractions were conducted. Full vision exams were provided including patients leaving with their brand new glasses made on site. This year First Presbyterian helped with making sandwiches for those involved in the event and provided overnight housing for medical professionals that came to Harrisonburg for this event.

A wealth of community resources were on site as well as lots of support from sponsors and donors. Unfortunately these services are greatly in need in our area and some patients were turned away once capacity was met and the clinic's ability to provide care was maxed out.

***Thank you to all who contributed!***



## Stepping out of Comfort and into Renewal

Most likely, we have all passionately sung songs such as: “Here I am Lord...I will go Lord where You lead” or “Where You go, I’ll Go...I will Follow You”. However, did we really mean it? Have you considered how the Lord might take you up on the offer? Our Global Missions Committee asked if I would consider going on a trip to Central Asia. My quick response in my mind was, “NO!” Through His Word, counsel from other believers, and prayers of confession, I cried out to Him and said “YES” to His call to go. **Too often we get stuck in our comfort zone, and if we’re honest, our minds are dull to God’s wonder-working power.** There’s nothing like stepping out in faith, for Him to renew your zest, unhinge you, thrust you into constant prayer, trust of Him, and clinging to Him every moment.



**Throughout our journey, we heard dramatic stories of conversion** as more than one shared how they privately cried out “Are you real God, are you real Jesus?” The Lord heard their cries and revealed Himself to them in visions or dreams reminiscent of the early Church. Many of these nationals, who are now believers, live out their faith by how they love their families and vibrantly share their faith at great risk. They live where Christianity is not looked upon favorably.

Islam is intertwined with their culture, faith practices, and family heritage. Although they may suffer persecution and even death, they boldly and tirelessly share the Gospel. **How often do I not share the Gospel, because I fear I may offend someone, even though my risk of persecution is not near the level of our brothers and sisters in Central Asia?** One believer we met had ministered over a year to a young woman, and while we were there, she accepted Christ. This believer cried while sharing this story of an 18-year-old friend coming to faith. When was the last time I cried tears of joy when someone has said “Yes” to Jesus?

In one country, with a population of over 18 million, it is estimated that the number of Christians is .01%! One pastor said they have a vision of 222: by 2022 they are committed to praying and sharing the Good News in hopes the percentage will grow to .2%. Underground churches meet in a different home each week to avoid unwanted attention. **They put into practice what it means to be “innocent as doves and as shrewd as snakes”** when it comes to sharing yet remaining under the “radar.”



I met families in the poorest of villages. It was incredible to hear their stories! The people would quickly have us sit on the floor of their home as they spread out a blanket to serve us bread with a cup of tea and sometimes even soup. **Knowing this may be all the food they have for supper, they wanted to share it with visitors.** People with no money and no hope of Jesus shared all they had with this relatively rich believer in Jesus. Talk about being humbled and caught between not wanting to eat their meager morsels of food, yet not wanting to offend them by rejecting their gift! **It challenges us ,who are called to practice hospitality and give generously, to do likewise.** These countries are surrounded by majestic mountains blanketed in snow, and yet most of the time the people in the big cities cannot see them due to the smog caused by smoke stacks burning coal and car pollution. To me it became a symbol of what is spiritually at hand: they are veiled to the majesty of Jesus Christ, the Light of Life, while the Prince of Lies, Satan, has blanketed them with his darkness and bondage to sin.

Acts 1:8 says: **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.”** The Lord calls us to be a witness by praying for, giving to, and going to places near and far for the sake of the Gospel. I’m blessed beyond measure by the Lord calling me to go, through the gracious giving by many of you, as well as, by the prayers that sustained, protected and encouraged me.

**Thank you in advance for praying for those in this forgotten region and for generously giving of your resources to help those in need, and those serving the Lord to have their needs met. Let us pray for one another in how each of us may be challenged in our spiritual walk to step out of our comfort zones to serve Him.** Central Asia is in need of short term/ two-week missionaries to come alongside a national in areas of farming, business, health, learning English etc. You can give to Global Missions and designate funds to those people/ministries vetted in Central Asia.

Finally, next time we sing “Here I am Lord” or “Where You go, I will follow You”, may we mean it and say “YES” for **He wants to stretch us spiritually**, and He also wants us to be His “chosen instruments” in ministering to other believers who are bringing others into His Kingdom whether in Harrisonburg or to the ends of the world and everywhere in between. Don’t let Him pass you by!

*In Christ’s love, Karen Thayer*

**Join Jim and Karen for a Deeper Dive  
May 19th, 10:15am, Room 205**

They will share in detail, including pictures about this eye-opening experience, as well as what new thing the Lord is calling Karen to do! Hope you can join us!

## Walk for Nasaruni Academy

On April 22, Frank Sprinkel headed to Virginia's northernmost point of the Appalachian Trail (AT) to begin a journey of approximately 550 miles in about 40 days to the southernmost point of the AT. This walk is to raise awareness and funds for the Nasaruni Academy for Maasai tribe girls located near Narok, Kenya. The traditional culture for girls of the Maasai tribe is to marry early in life (age 12-14) and then be relegated to a life of hard, physical work, and poverty, preventing education. Cultural traditions result in fathers marrying off their daughters in early life to a polygamous marriage, often with older men, in exchange for livestock.

Alice Sayo was born into a large Maasai family. She was the 11th of 12 children. After her father died, Alice was destined for an early marriage, but the efforts of her mother and a brother enabled her to go to school and follow her dreams of becoming a teacher. Alice came to James Madison in a teacher exchange program sponsored by the U.S. State Department and shared her dream of providing educational opportunities for other Maasai girls with Dr. Michelle Cude, a JMU professor. From the combined dreams of these two women, the Nasaruni Academy was founded in 2013, with humble beginnings of 13 girls meeting under a tree. Fast forward to today and the school has about 150 girls, 120 of which board at the school. Currently, girls are enrolled in grades 1-8, with future plans to develop a high school.

The walk Frank is doing has a fundraising goal of \$10,000 to support the building of a dormitory since many girls are double bunking in single beds. Currently that goal has been surpassed by almost \$6,000, and with one week left to make donations! If you would like to make a donation go to [www.mightycause.com/story/WalkforNasaruni](http://www.mightycause.com/story/WalkforNasaruni).



## High School Youth at Modgnik Retreat

By Taylor Evick

Modgnik is an annual spring retreat in Goshen, Va. where we join with other youth groups across the state to spend a weekend enjoying games, being with friends, and growing in our relationship with God. This year, the theme was "Reconciliation With the Kingdom". At this camp, we were reminded where our identities should be found. As teenagers, we are given so many things to hide behind: social media, good grades, sports, etc... but we must all make the choice of whether we want to live fully or be comfortable. Everyone has wounds they wish to hide, but we are reminded of the everlasting joy and hope we have in our identity in Christ. We can't allow the ways the world tries to define us affect the truth about who God says we are. Because of the sacrifice made for us, we are redeemed and covered by God's grace.

On the last day of our retreat, we discussed how we can move forward as followers of Christ. Once we accept an identity based on how God sees us, we can live confidently without having to find our worth in how others view us. We can experience God's unconditional love for us, and boldly proclaim His love to others. Modgnik allows us to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, and have fun while doing so. It truly is one of the best weekends ever.



It's time to register for **Summer JAM Camp** whether volunteering to help or bringing children, grandchildren, and their friends!

Registration links are on [www.firstpreshbg.org](http://www.firstpreshbg.org) and our facebook page!



May 2 – Betty Yost, Bob Roberts, Gary Peterson  
May 3 – Pat Banks, Kappy Barnes  
May 4 – Lorene Edmunds, April Garrison, Dona Hinkle,  
Steve Zumbro, Ginna Bauhan, Allison McKenzie  
May 5 – Lakey Logan, Donald Callender, Melissa Jenkins,  
Julie Clements, Linley Hendricksen  
May 6 – Alex Adjei, Keith Saum  
May 7 – Gabriel Stoltzfus  
May 8 – Judy Hoover, Mary Stratton, Sarah Price,  
Andrew Landes  
May 9 – Will Hancock  
May 10 – Brenda Ashworth, Tom Templeton  
May 11 – Ron Hylton, Matthew Craig  
May 12 – Gloria Price, Sam Obenshain  
May 13 – Carolyn Edlind, Betsy Kennedy, Cora Smith  
May 14 – Teresa Callender, Addie DePoy  
May 15 – Irene Estes, Gary Beatty, Brad Wetzel  
May 16 – Richard Evick  
May 17 – Kemper Funkhouser  
May 18 – Mary Bryan, Caleb Corder  
May 19 – Patricia Copper, Rylie Floyd  
May 20 – Gene Stevens, Amy Henderson  
May 21 – Lanny Branner, D'Earcy Davis, Charlie Ammons,  
Garry Nichols  
May 22 – Kay Mundy, Libby Langridge  
May 24 – Billie Brown  
May 26 – John Leake, Nita Lord, Addison Weakley,  
Samuel Larson  
May 27 – Dennis Snyder, Loree Dove, Ann Bauhan  
May 28 – Carol Miller, Morris Fendley  
May 29 – Brock Beatty  
May 31 – Hunter Miller  
June 1 – Barbara Harkins, Seth Hill  
June 3 – Jonathan Krauss  
June 4 – Joshua Briggman  
June 5 – Dot Spicer, Camden Langridge, Sawyer Lemn

May 2—Matt and Sarah Richardson celebrate 4 years  
May 3—Joel and Keri Davis celebrate 16 years  
May 11—Bob and Deborah Roberts celebrate 45 years  
May 14—Jim and Jean Simmons celebrate 59 years  
May 15—Devon and Cathy Phillips celebrate 37 years  
May 16—Bill and Laura Lee Conklin celebrate 27 years  
May 17—Dan and Carole Downey celebrate 44 years  
May 18—J.C. and Anne Depoy celebrate 28 years  
May 18—Beau and Heather Ange celebrate 6 years  
May 19—Ron and Lou McCoy celebrate 63 years  
May 21—Rob and Judy Augst celebrate 42 years  
May 23—Bill and Trudy Ham celebrate 38 years  
May 24—Danny and Melinda Beam celebrate 39 years  
May 24—Mac and April Garrison celebrate 39 years  
May 30—Donald and Teresa Callender celebrate 32 years  
May 30—Mark and Suzanne Obenshain celebrate 32 years  
May 27—Barry and Ann Niland celebrate 30 years

### On the Calendar

**April 28, May 5, May 12, May 19** Connections Class,  
9:30-11:00am, Room 208, contact Scott Thayer if you  
would like to join the church!

**May 5** Intergenerational Bicycle Road Ride, 2pm,  
meet at Liberty Park (rain date is May 12)

**May 28** Session Meets, 6:30pm, Room 201

**June 2** New Sunday School Series starts

**June 2** Meredith Chapel Communion Service, 2pm  
and week of Home Communion Visits

**June 9-14** Renew Camp

**June 24-28** Summer JAM Camp, 9am-12:00pm

**June 25** Session Meets, 6:30pm, Room 201

**June 30** 10am Worship Service & Picnic in Liberty Park  
(no Sunday School)

### *We Express our Sympathy to:*

The Hollandsworth family, in the loss of Dot Hollandsworth, on April 10th.  
The Dingleline family, in the loss of Emily Dingleline, on April 21st.  
The Wisman family, in the loss of Fred Wisman, on April 23rd.

*I express my sincerest thanks to my church family  
for their expressions of love during my TLC week  
through beautiful flowers and cards.*

*Charlotte Cole*

*Thanks for all the cards, texts, calls, visits, and  
prayers during my recent surgery and continued  
recovery. Words can't express my appreciation for  
the quilt from the Kerus Quilters. It is beautiful and  
I have used it so much. Special thanks to Pastor  
Scott for his visits. Loretta and I are so blessed to  
have such a wonderful church family. May God  
continue to bless each of you.*

*Mike Clark*

**The former Sally Blosser Ladies Bible Class** has received thank-you's from First Step, New Creation, the Salvation Army, People Helping People, Family Resource Center, and Gideons International for funds they donated to these groups when the class disbanded. The funds were given to the class earlier by individuals, most specifically Mary Spitzer Etter. A donation was also made to the Christian Education program of the church.