

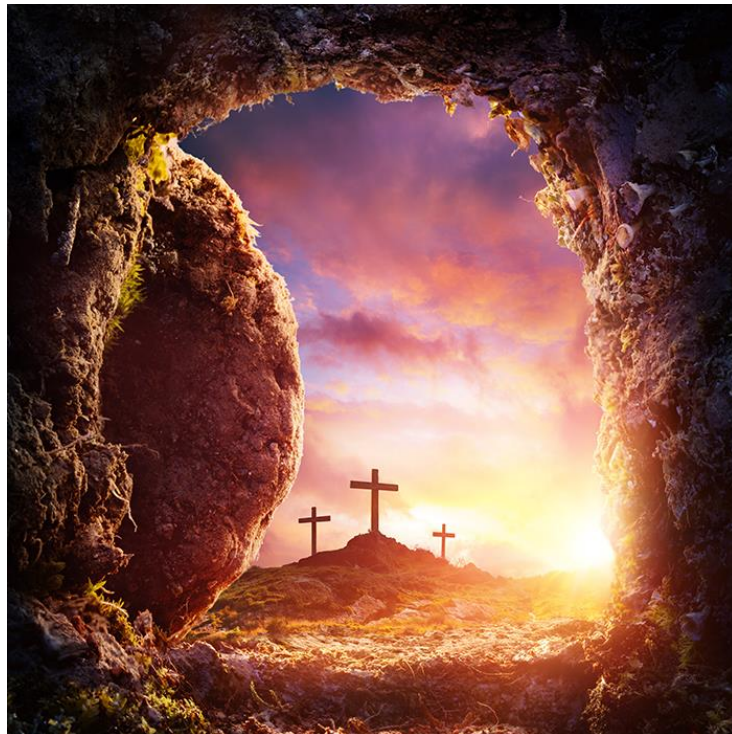


# FIRST and ForMOST

First Presbyterian Church of Annandale

April 2020

## FROM YOUR PASTOR



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

During this Covid-19 virus emergency, I am making every effort to create a new Online Streaming Ministry called "The Resurrection is Everywhere: God's Loving and Comforting WORD". It is my goal to make this Devotional and Worshipful Ministry available to everyone with access to the Internet using our church's FPCA Facebook Page

(<https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChurchOfAnnandale/>), the FPCA Website ([www.fpcannandale.org](http://www.fpcannandale.org)), and YouTube. It is my intent to begin

developing this new ministry so that those in our congregation can focus our attention on God's Loving and Comforting WORD every Sunday morning, beginning on Sunday, March 29, 2020, and every Sunday thereafter. I believe that this Sunday Virtual Worship Service Ministry should be offered whether or not our church is able welcome worshippers to worship services in our sanctuary every Sunday. So, if we personally assemble for worship in our sanctuary on Sundays (like we have always done so faithfully for 65 years) or not (like we are being forced to do now because of the Covid-19 virus emergency), there will still be an opportunity for all of us to faithfully worship God together as One Christian Church Family.

Furthermore, I am also developing another NEW WORSHIP MINISTRY that will feature DAILY DEVOTIONS every morning of the week (Monday through Friday - at 10:00 am) to begin in the near future. It is my fervent hope and prayer that by focusing on God's WORD together...in the best and worst of times...we will be able to live without fear and be living examples of God's WORD to a world that needs it so very, very much.

With all of this in mind, let us begin a glorious new day of Resurrection and Hope with God's WORD from Philippians 4: 4-7 (Christian Standard Version of the Bible):

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your graciousness and gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Your Pastor and Friend,



Dr. Chris Looker

*Please note: the Preaching Schedule is accurate as this April issue goes to print the fourth Monday of March. With events evolving rapidly in this COVID-19 time, the schedule is subject to change.*

**PREACHING SCHEDULE FOR APRIL 2020**

*First Presbyterian Church of Annandale*

April 5, 2020

*Palm Sunday*

*Service of Holy Communion*

*Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

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April 12, 2020

*Easter Sunday*

*Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

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April 19, 2020

*Stella Lee, Preaching*

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April 26, 2020

*Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

**APRIL BIRTHDAYS**



*(Note: Ralph Greenwood, whose reflections have filled this space while the Rev. Bill Jokeka takes a break from writing his column, has graciously agreed that the following urgent request needs this prominent place)*

## **COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS AND HELPING OTHERS**

Which type person are you? Do you wake each morning saying, “Good morning, Lord!” or do you wake each morning saying, “Good Lord! Morning.” I hope you fall into that first category, greeting God each morning in the wonder of God’s new day. It’s up to you, you know; it’s all the same day and the same Lord.

Whichever type you are, or even if you say you are sometimes one and sometimes the other, or even neither, I have a special request to make of you. Some of you may know that I volunteer in our FPCA-Christian Childcare Center (FPCA-CCC), playing with and loving the babies and toddlers, then highlighting three of them each month in this newsletter in the article *Of Such Is the Kingdom of Heaven*.

Elder Jennifer Stoy, Director of the CCC, has had to close the center for four weeks (March 26-April 10, 2020), following state and county guidelines for safety in this time of COVID-19. She did not make this decision lightly and has the full support and agreement of Dr. Chris Looker as Head of Staff, as well as that of the CCC Committee and of our session of ruling elders. The financial effects of the closing were discussed at length, and everyone agreed that the only way to approach this as Christians would be to pay the CCC teachers their full salaries for the duration. This will amount to \$26,000 for the four weeks and does not include the director’s salary or any ongoing expenses. At the same time, the CCC would also waive tuition, since many of the CCC parents may need to find and pay for alternative child care during this time. Fortunate ones may be able to be home with their babies, but not all. Even those working from home might need a caregiver to allow them uninterrupted work time.

Through the grace of God, the Childcare Center has grown rapidly in its less than two years of operation, so it has been able to put some of its earnings into a reserve fund. Because of this reserve, the CCC will be able to pay its teachers for the four-week period. If the COVID-19 virus emergency continues beyond that time, new plans must be made. The CCC committee, staff, and session are working on those.

Here is my fervent and heartfelt request to you:

***WILL YOU HELP THE CHRISTIAN CHILDCARE CENTER?  
PLEASE***

***WILL YOU HELP THE CHRISTIAN CHILDCARE CENTER?  
PLEASE***

No, that's not an editorial or printing "Oops! above. The question is worth repeating.

This is a one-time request to ask you to give financially, as you feel led by the Holy Spirit. So often in times of need, people wonder what they can do to help. What can one person do to make any difference? Here is the answer: give, as you feel led. No amount is too large or too small. Every donation will go directly to the CCC to meet its financial obligations. If, by the grace of God and your generosity, giving exceeds need at this time, any overflow will help replenish the reserve fund, now being depleted rapidly with each pay period.

Practially speaking, every donaton is tax-deductible, as the FPCA-CCC is a registered tax-emempt, non-profit organization. Checks may be made payable to "FPCA-CCC." They may be mailed to the Childcare Center at 7610 Newcastle Drive, Annandale, VA 22003. For those with access to the church building, checks, or money in sealed envelopes, may be slipped under the office door or into the red CCC box immediately to the left of the office door. If you desire a receipt for your donation, please note this with your donation.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

May God continue to bless your life.

Elder Carol Gage  
CCC Volunteer  
CCC Committee

## **SPECIAL FAMILY WORSHIP SERVICE**

The special Family Worship Service focuses on sharing God's Love in innovative ways, including clap-along, singalong songs, instrumental music by The Band, Bible story videos on the big screen, and a Children's Sermon by Family Ministries Director Stella Lee. Held on the last Sunday of each month, the service counts among its most precious guests the children and their parents from the Christian Childcare Center.

The March 29, 2020, service had to be cancelled because of concerns over COVID-19. As this issue of the newsletter goes to print on the fourth Monday of the Month (March 23, 2020), we are planning the next service for April 26. We fervently hope the coronavirus will be on the wane by then and all bans of meeting in larger groups lifted. We appreciate your understanding.

Stella Lee  
Director of Family Ministries

## **APRIL IN THE POTTER'S HOUSE**

A beginning pottery class was planned for the month of April, but has had to be postponed. We appreciate your understanding.

## **SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FOR APRIL**

Both morning worship and the regular stated session meeting were cancelled on March 15, 2020. When the postponed session meeting is held, the highlights will be included in the next issue of the newsletter.

While not meeting formally, session members and Moderator Dr. Chris Looker have been discussing current affairs and their impact on our church and childcare center. Should you have questions, concerns, or suggestions, please feel free to call or email the clerk ((703) 250 2552; [clgage@runbox.com](mailto:clgage@runbox.com)).

Thank you for your understanding.

Carol Gage  
Clerk of Session

## **REST IN PEACE**

W. C. Hester, longtime church member and friend, passed away peacefully at his home on March 10, 2020. Rejoice that he has joined the Church Eternal.

**GOD IS IN CHARGE****GOD ALWAYS HAS BEEN IN CHARGE****GOD ALWAYS WILL BE IN CHARGE****REJOICE AND BE GLAD!!!**

Each passage below confirms that God is in charge, as has always been true. They are passages of high hope for me and, I hope, for you, especially at this present time. (All passages from the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*)

***Philippians 4:6-7***

<sup>6</sup> Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

***1 John 4:18***

<sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.

***Luke 12:22-26***

<sup>22</sup> He said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. <sup>23</sup> For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. <sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! <sup>25</sup> And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? <sup>26</sup> If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest?"

***Revelation 1:17***

<sup>17</sup> When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he placed his right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, . . .

## LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME

While this two-page center spread of the newsletter is primarily written with our Christian Childcare parents in mind, I know that church members, friends of the church, and others read it, too, to learn what's happening in the childcare center and to stay in touch with this ministry of our church.

So, though CCC parents received the information here some time ago, when the childcare center first closed temporarily, I want to include it in this April issue so that it may reach a wider audience. Naturally, I've changed the wording slightly for the newsletter, but the content is the same:

After careful consideration, the Christian Childcare Center will be following the safety advice that Fairfax County has issued. This means that the CCC will remain closed until April 10th, 2020 (Friday). This decision was not made lightly, and we are devastated that we will have to close our doors for safety measures

We are a Church and a Christian Childcare Center, and as you know we do everything to keep our prices below market. For the four weeks that the CCC will be closed, and with presumably no income being formally billed to families, the CCC will continue to pay \$26,000 of salary for our caregivers during this trying time. If any families feel led, donations made to the CCC to remain financially capable of continuing the best possible CCC services and care over the long term would be greatly appreciated.

Any payments that will be due for the next four weeks will be waived until April 10, 2020. For families that have already paid for the month, the payment can either be kept as credit, or can be refunded to the account used within 5-7 business days.

Regular tuition will begin April 13th, 2020.

Jenn Stoy  
CCC Director

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Joseph April 27





## OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

One day just before the Christian Childcare Center had to be closed for safety from the COVID-19 virus emergency, I heard prolonged sobbing and then louder crying from the toddlers' room on the second floor. This is most unusual: the toddlers are usually full of good cheer and any crying is intermittent and brief.

I scooped up the crying toddler, a curly-headed little fellow who is unfailingly happy and full of fun. That day, he was full of woe; perhaps he hadn't napped well earlier. Somehow, though he loves the teacher who was there, she wasn't enough for him. I sat down on a toddler-sized chair, simultaneously cuddling him in my lap and opening the book he clutched. In moments, as I read dramatically, adding sound effects and hand motions to the story, the other toddlers joined us. They all snuggled in as close as they could get, chubby hands resting on my lap, three within the hug of my free arm. They are so full of love, these children!

Book finished, we began singing "The Itsy-Bitsy Spider" and by the third time through (okay, the singing was mine alone initially), everyone was "walking" that spider up the waterspout and washing it out with the rain. We might have continued indefinitely, but my little woeful one morphed back into his usual happy self and slid off my lap to play. He's a charmer, that child! As are they all.

We here at the childcare center cannot say often enough how very dear all the toddlers and babies are to us. I am so blessed to be able to volunteer to play with them and love them. I am greeted with outstretched arms whether I am standing outside the door looking in, or am in the room itself. Thank you, parents, for making this possible.

As this issue of the newsletter goes to print, the CCC has been closed for one week. I have missed my little friends SO much! I will be so glad to welcome them all back when the time is safe for the childcare center to open once again.

Carol Gage  
CCC Volunteer

## MEET FELLOW CHRISTIANS

### SAMUEL MORSE



We have a wonderful fellow Christian for our April article, who was not only born, but also passed away in April. Let us meet Samuel Morse, who created the electric telegraph which managed to connect parts of the world.

Samuel Morse was born on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 1791, and lived till April 2, 1872. He is known as an American painter and the inventor of the single-wire telegraph system, as well as the co-inventor of the Morse code, the method of transmitting textual information as a series of on and off tones. His discovery changed the way the messages are sent and received all over the world.

Morse was born in Massachusetts as a first child of a Calvinist pastor who insisted on the preservation of Puritan traditions. When Samuel was only nine years old, he entered Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and when he was 14, he went to Yale College. To earn money, he painted portraits. He studied religious philosophy and mathematics. He also attended lectures on electricity, which influenced his interests on electromagnetism and electric communication. But his main focus was still art, and he wished to continue his career as a painter. However, his father insisted that he become a bookseller's apprentice, which would prepare him to be a book publisher. His parents still allowed him to sail to England for more education in Arts, attending the Royal Academy of Arts in London, where he was instructed by some famous English painters.

In 1815 Samuel Morse returned to the United States and opened an art studio in Boston, becoming a professional painter. This was not the only fact that made him happy. He met and married Susan Walker, and had three children. Some of his most famous paintings come from this time. Unfortunately, his happiness ended when his wife died while he was on a journey. She was only 25 years old! Samuel was devastated by the inability of the message system to inform him faster. That's when he started to devise a plan to create a new way of long distance communication. Morse found out that information sent via copper cables travels quickly over great distances. He started planning creation of the single-wire telegraph, which led him to design the first telegraph and submit it to the US patent office.

Let us look at Samuel Morse as being a fellow Christian who was not just the son of a pastor, but a "Fellow Christian" who used the skills God has given him to improve the communication between human beings all over the world.

*Marta Strada*

### **BIT ABOUT A BOOK**



*The Man Who Listens to Horses*, by Monty Roberts, erases the distance between horse and human behavior, though Equus, as Monty terms the entire horse race, stands at the opposite end of the spectrum from Man. Equus is a flight animal; man is a fight animal.

Look for the full review of this superb book in the next issue of FIRST and ForMOST.

Bookworm

*(Note: While the Easter Potluck dinner is still on schedule as this April issue goes to print on March 23, 2020, that may change.)*

## **WHAT'S "LUCK O' THE POT" ANYWAY?** **Aka "POTLUCK"**

Our Potluck Ministry began nearly three years ago with our first Independence Day (July 4<sup>th</sup>) Potluck. People flocked to it and had a great feast, great conversation, and general camaraderie. What a beautiful ministry was begun with that first Potluck. Thanks to Deacon Jabeen Ghulam for initiating the Potluck Ministry and for continuing to host it with great success!

The session recently passed a standing motion to continue this outreach ministry with four potlucks annually: Easter Day, Independence Day (July 4), Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. However, while all seem pleased with the idea, not everyone has grown up knowing what a potluck meal is.

According to Webster's, "potluck" is taking one's chance on a meal; eating whatever happens to be available, or inviting people to come and eat whatever food may be cooked, with no special preparations. So, it is "the luck of the pot," or whatever happens to come out of the pot to eat.

Potlucks were part of my church heritage, as I grew up in the Midwest. In my early 20s, I attended a tiny church made up of only seven families, about 21 people in all, including children. We enjoyed potluck once a month after the worship service, always on Communion Sunday. One month there were no desserts; usually several delicious desserts were served. No one commented, but the following month, fourteen desserts graced the table. No main dishes, no side dishes, no salads! Everyone laughed and enjoyed more coconut cake than they had eaten in a long time. The month after that, there were no meat dishes, but we had salads, cakes, pies, and fruit cobblers. Then, somehow, the congregation got back to normal with a few main dishes, a few side dishes and salads, and a few desserts. The meal of desserts only became a standing joke.

Not knowing what foods to expect at a Potluck is part of the charm. Here at FPCA, we always have plenty of variety, and there is far too much to eat, with food to take home, if anyone wants some. Perhaps this is the Presbyterian way of doing things "decently and in order." Even though one or two people faithfully sign the sign-up sheet, it's hardly necessary. All a potluck needs is people willing to help to feed others.

Our next Potluck will be on Easter Sunday at Noon. Come and enjoy good food, good fellowship and the all-pervading spirit of Love, Peace, and Kindness

which are inherent here at FPCA. Bring whatever you like, and enjoy what everyone else brings. It's all delicious!

Since a number of the people who attend the Potlucks do so because they are alone here, we plan to add an "Afterglow" to the main Potluck. If you would like to stay after the main meal, linger for another cup of coffee or tea, or simply sit around and talk awhile with anyone else who is enjoying being here, please do. Carol Gage has offered to make a fresh pot of coffee and another of tea, since she, too, enjoys the chance to talk (as if she doesn't do that enough already!).

Cass Goodland  
Staff Reporter

### LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

Only room to say: Check out the Little Free Library, at the junction of Library and Foyer. Now open for your reading pleasure.

### FROZEN CHOSEN

*A word about Uncle Agony's Advice Column: Many people seem to enjoy reading advice from columnists like Ann Landers, Emily Post, or Miss Manners (Judith Martin). When a friend offered the F and FM team an old bound copy of dozens of advice columns from the pen of "Uncle Agony," they leapt at the opportunity to read them. Uncle Agony's advice seems as fresh today as when he wrote it, even if the words are sometimes old-fashioned. He must've had quite a following in his day. We hope you appreciate this voice from the past. Here's Uncle Agony:*

Dear Uncle Agony,

On what can we depend in this turbulent world? War, rumors of war, pestilence, influenza, is there any hope at all for us? I am so very  
Troubled in Trenton

**DEAR TROUBLED,**

**Yes, resoundingly yes, there is hope! God is in charge here; you need not fear. Think on the promise in Philippians 4: 6-7, which tells you that God's peace will guard your heart and mind in Jesus Christ. Rejoice!**

**UNCLE AGONY**

*Note: Announcements are correct as of March 23, 2020, but subject to change)*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **MEN'S BREAKFAST**

Come one, come all, to the monthly Men's Breakfast  
Saturday, April 4, 2020, 8:30 AM; Room 105  
GREAT FUN, FELLOWSHIP, WORSHIP

### **BOOK CLUB**

Tuesday, April 7, 2020; 1:00 PM; Library  
We will discuss "Unsheltered" by Barbara Kingsolver  
We welcome readers!

### **THE WIRED WORD**

Sunday School lessons based on contemporary issues  
Sundays, 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM, Room 105  
Moderator, Sandy Mori

### **BELLS CHOIR**

Tuesdays, 7:00 – 8:00 PM, Sanctuary  
Director, Betty Clark  
We welcome new members!

### **PRISCILLA CIRCLE**

Wednesday, April 15, 2020, 2:00 PM, Memorial Chapel  
The Ten Commandments: "Love Carved in Stone," an in-depth study  
Moderator, Ruth Hartman

### **MAUNDY THURSDAY COMMUNION SERVICE**

CANCELLED

### **SHEPHERD'S CENTER ANNANDALE-SPRINGFIELD**

All April 2020 events cancelled.  
For information, call SCAS office: 703 941 1419

**DUE DATE: April 15, 2020,** for May issue of FIRST and ForMOST.

Submissions: Email to [clgage@runbox.com](mailto:clgage@runbox.com) AND [office@fpcannandale.org](mailto:office@fpcannandale.org)