



# FIRST and ForMOST

First Presbyterian Church of Annandale

## FROM YOUR PASTOR



***“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and rust and corrosion destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths, rust, and corrosion do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matt. 6: 19-21)***

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As many of you know, because of the Covid 19 Pandemic, I have been recording our Sunday Devotionals and Worship Services since March of 2020 and broadcasting them on our church's [fpcannandale.org](http://fpcannandale.org) webpage, YouTube, and Facebook pages. In the process, I have learned how to:

1. Digitally record the video of our devotionals and worship services using various cameras and camera settings to properly and clearly record the visual images;
2. Use wired and wireless sound recording devices to record the sound of the speaking voices, organ, and singing;
3. Learn from scratch how to use VideoPad Video Editing Software on multiple computers;
4. Create a video file that could be uploaded as an “exported” and finished project to Google Drive, our [fpcannandale.org](http://fpcannandale.org) webpage, YouTube, and Facebook; and,
5. Research, write, and deliver the devotionals and sermons, while (at the same time I am delivering them) also controlling the video equipment and sound recording devices.

The reason I am telling all of you about this is, because of the suddenness and debilitating effects of the Covid 19 Pandemic, FPCA had no choice but to do whatever we could to accomplish the ***First*** and ***Third*** of the “***Six Great Ends of the Church***”, which define what we **MUST** do in order to be Christ’s Church in this world...principles which set the Church apart from every other human organization on earth.

What are the ***First*** and ***Third*** “***Great Ends of the Church***”?

1. The Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of humankind; and,
3. The maintenance of Divine Worship. (For both, see ***Book of Order, F-1.0304***)

But, how could we accomplish these two “***Great Ends***” during a Covid-19 Pandemic? How could we fulfill our God-given duty to make sure of these two “***Great Ends***” when our government officials would not allow us to come to church on Sundays to worship in person? And, how could we do that if it was considered unsafe to do so?

Well, as the old saying goes: *“Necessity is the mother of invention.”* And, whether our church had never done what was necessary to broadcast or live-stream our worship services on the internet...whether we knew what we were doing or not...we were left with **NO ALTERNATIVE but to do everything that we could so these two “Great Ends” could be accomplished and continued.**

So, first of all, we had to get over the typical human tendency to *“store up our treasures on earth.”* By that, I mean to say that up until the Covid 19 Pandemic we had gotten used to coming to our FPCA sanctuary and having *“in person”* worship services every Sunday. We got used to singing hymns. We got used to following a very similar Order of Worship and Bulletin. We got used to Passing the Peace, hugging each other, shaking hands, and getting closer to one another...**than six feet!**

But suddenly, all of that stopped. In the blink of an eye, we, as a church and Christian Childcare Center, were literally shut down...closed...not knowing when we could reopen again. For a while we were not even allowed to come to church or care for any children.

In a way, we had become so used to the way things were, we couldn't believe that things had changed.

It's the same with our treasures...or those things we call or believe to be our *“treasures.”* We have them all over our house! And, it's very difficult to throw any of them away! Even when we have someone come into our houses and point out how much junk there is, we still have a devil of a time getting rid of anything.

And, what's even more, most of the things that we believe to be our *“treasures”* are really anything **but** treasures. How much stuff do we have in our houses that we will never, ever use again? If we are never, ever going to use it again, then is there any rational way that we can call it a treasure? What if it's something that we **REALLY** should be tossing into the trash...but just can't seem to get ourselves to do it?

What if it's old? What if it has little or no sentimental value at all? What if someone else could use it and benefit from it...even though we haven't used it in 30 years? What if it **and** all of the other stuff in our homes that we really don't need have literally turned our homes into a junkyard?

There is a difference between a *“home”* and a *“house.”* A home is filled with treasures. A house could be filled with anything...and that certainly includes junk!

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Jesus tells us to “*store up our treasures in heaven.*” Just think about that for a moment.

What is heaven? It’s where we believe that we will go after we die. It’s a place where we won’t have any **thing** that exists in this world. Yet, it seems to be a place where we **ALL** want to go after we die...at least I do.

So, I ask you, **why do we all want to go to a place that doesn’t have any toys? Any money? Any coin or baseball collections? Any stuff?**

**Also**, if we’re so in love with the world and all its **stuff** what makes us think that we’ll even like heaven...where there most likely isn’t any **stuff!**

Or, do we want to go to heaven after we die because we believe it is better than the alternative...that, of course, being hell?

In the end, the most important points that Jesus is trying to make in this Scripture lesson are:

1. Don’t get so used to the way things are, because they’re going to change!
2. Don’t fall in love too much with **STUFF** that’s here in this world because, no matter what you think, you **REALLY** can’t take it with you after you die.
3. If anything, do whatever you can to love God **more** than **ANYTHING** or **ANYONE** on this earth. It’s **REALLY** difficult...but that doesn’t make it impossible. After all, we know that “*all things work together for good for those who love the Lord.*” (Rom. 8:28)
4. If you can, try to fall in love with heaven...where there will be NO **THINGS**. Sure, there will be Jesus Christ and eternal life. There will be everlasting joy and no more pain or suffering. And, thank goodness...there will be NO CLUTTERED HOUSES!

Your Friend and Pastor,



Dr. Chris Looker

**PREACHING SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER 2020**

*First Presbyterian Church of Annandale*

November 1, 2020

*Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

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November 8, 2020

*The Rev. Bill Jokela, Preaching*

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November 15, 2020

*Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

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November 22, 2020

*Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

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November 29, 2020

*Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

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**NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

**LOOKING AHEAD TO DECEMBER**



## LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME

November's here! At the Christian Childcare Center, we're thinking about Thanksgiving Day. The children took home miniature pumpkins the Friday before Halloween. Who knows, maybe parents will bake those into miniature pumpkin pies . . . if they haven't carved them into miniature jack-o-lanterns!

The children, especially the older toddlers, get very excited about holidays. The teachers are leading them in Thanksgiving projects and explaining Thanksgiving to them. It's about turkey and pumpkin pie; it's about getting together with family and friends; it's about sharing our bounty with the needy. But, most of all, Thanksgiving is about giving thanks to God for all God has given us.

May you have a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving! We are so grateful you are here, that you are entrusting your children to our care, that you are such great parents!

Jenn Stoy (aka Miss Jennie)  
Christian Childcare Center Director



## CHILDCARE CENTER DIRECTOR:

### JENNIFER STOY

**Editorial note: we are pleased to print this photo of Jennifer Stoy, Director of our Christian Childcare Center. Captured on Photo Day in October, it shows that “Miss Jennie” does, indeed, find the rare moment of stillness. She’s more often seen flying through the halls, whisking around the bend in the staircase balancing dinner trays, or swooping to welcome a toddler with outstretched arms.**



## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FOR OCTOBER 2020

Dr. Chris Looker, moderator, opened the October 18, 2020, stated meeting with prayer, asking that it be a time of worship, not only a meeting.

Christian Childcare Director Jenn Stoy reported that the center now has 34 children enrolled as well as a waiting list.

Dr. Looker thanked Elder John Fennig for replacing the deteriorating roof on the shed which houses one of the riding mowers. He noted that the \$500 expenditure for materials was an excellent investment to protect a \$5,000 shed.

After discussion, the session approved motions to accept:

- The combined Pastor-in-Training Intern (PTI) and Administrative Assistant positions for Stella Lee for 2021;
- The 2021 Proposed Budget-FPCA Annual Operating Budget.

Elder Nancy DeVera, Nominating Committee Chair, will reach out to the Class of 2020 elders and deacons to remain active for a second three-year class and will also reach out to the ever-faithful member-at-large for his continuing service.

Carol Gage  
Clerk of Session

## TEXTING TO KEEP IN TOUCH



The Reverend Bill Jokela has a great idea for 21<sup>st</sup> century pastoral calls and keeping us in touch with news of the church. He plans to use his phone to text those who are unable to come to church, as well as any who would appreciate texting to keep in touch. Please let him know if you would like to hear from him.

## **BEST WISHES AND CONGRATULATIONS!**

Christina DeVera and Joshua Stevenson were married on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, at 10:30 AM at Bluemont Winery, with a live-streaming of the event in a double-ring ceremony. With beautiful blue skies, the vineyard and valley were a gorgeous backdrop. In attendance were the immediate family members both locally and from China Grove, NC, for a total of 15. Josh's parents and maternal grandparents were in attendance. Two-year-old Avery was the flower girl, daughter of Matthew (Josh's brother) and Emily. Christina wore a mermaid style wedding dress with a floor length veil. The veil was custom made as Christina ordered the lace from Latvia. She wore the pearl and diamond necklace that was her mother's (Nancy) and was worn on her wedding day. Also, Christina wore the handkerchief her mother wore on her wedding day. Josh was sporting a custom three-piece tuxedo. Anthony DeVera escorted Christina down the stone-lined walkway as Danny sang "Come What May" from Moulin Rouge. Christina's wedding band was customized from incorporating her paternal grandmother's band into a platinum band. A delicious brunch was enjoyed by all. It was a very memorable day.

Submitted by Elder Nancy DeVera



## THANKSGIVING THOUGHTS

Reading these words: “Over the river and through the wood . . .“ may have you singing the rest of that old Thanksgiving favorite, ending with, “. . . hurrah for the fun, is the pudding done, hurrah for the pumpkin pie,” as well as the refrain: “For this is Thanksgiving Day!”

How will you celebrate Thanksgiving Day 2020? Those who have enjoyed gathering here at church for Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner for the last three years (and thanks to Deacon Jabeen Ghulam for introducing and overseeing this wonderful idea) will need to make an alternate plan. ZOOM Thanksgiving dinner anyone? It’s a thought!

Whatever plans you make, and however you celebrate this day dedicated to thankfulness, may it bring you great joy. May you experience the sure knowledge that God in His goodness has freely given you all that you have. Yes, you may have worked hard for it, but you know Who provided the work and set you at it.

May you then remember that **Sunday, November 29, 2020**, is **STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY:**

- the day our 2021 Stewardship Campaign culminates with the bringing of your 2021 Stewardship Pledge Cards/Envelope to the worship service,
- the time to pledge to return a portion of all you have been given from God to God,
- the season to remember how blessed you are by God.

**So, let us give thanks to God,  
the Giver of all good things,  
this Thanksgiving Day 2020!**

**DUE DATE: November 18, 2020**, for December issue of FIRST and ForMOST.  
Submissions: Email to [clgage@runbox.com](mailto:clgage@runbox.com) AND [office@fpcannandale.org](mailto:office@fpcannandale.org)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **BOOK CLUB**

Tuesday, November 3, 2020; 1:00 PM; Memorial Chapel  
We will discuss “The Moment of Lift” by Melinda Gates  
We welcome readers!

### **THE WIRED WORD**

Sunday School lessons based on contemporary issues  
Sundays, 11:45 AM via ZOOM  
Moderator, Sandy Mori

### **STATED SESSION MEETING**

Sunday, November 15, 2020  
Via ZOOM

### **PRISCILLA CIRCLE**

Wednesday, November 11, 2020; 2:00 PM; Memorial Chapel  
In-depth study of the Ten Commandments

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

The Shepherd’s Center continues to provide rides  
For information, call SCAS office: 703 941 1419

### **PASTORAL CALLS: TEXTING**

Text the Rev. Bill Jokela if you would like for him to reach out to you by texting  
or call the office at 703 941 3300  
and leave a message with Stella Lee

### **STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY**

Sunday, November 29, 2020  
Bring Stewardship Pledge Cards to worship service  
Rejoice that God has blessed you!