

FIRST and ForMOST

First Presbyterian Church of Annandale

September 2019

FROM YOUR PASTOR

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy and where thieves do not break in nor steal, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matthew 6: 19-21, MEV)



“WHERE IS YOUR TREASURE?”

A Greek writer named Lucian, who lived in the early 2nd Century A.D., described the earliest Christians like this, *“It is incredible to see the fervor and zeal with which the people of that religion help each other in their wants and needs. They spare nothing. Their first legislator [Jesus] has put it into their heads that they are all brothers and sisters!”*

When I think of the First Presbyterian Church of Annandale (“FPCA”), I see God’s blessings everywhere I look. Because we believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord, our desire to help, love, and care for one another and those in need is divinely inspired by God. When we love, we love because Jesus Christ first loved us. When we care, we remember Jesus saying, *“Greater love has no one than this, to lay down his/her life for one’s friends.”*

Yes, we have been given the gift of faith, *“assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things unseen”* (Hebrews 11:1). With that precious faith, we have been, are, and always will be able to have hope that tomorrow will be a better day; that when we fall down, the Lord will always help us to rise up again. As long as we trust in the Lord,

we will have confidence and the assurance that *“all things will work for good for those who love the Lord” (Rom. 8:28).*

For almost 64 glorious years, the First Presbyterian Church of Annandale has been meeting every challenge and taking every opportunity to put our faith into action here in our local community, throughout the United States, and internationally. With every change and challenge, our church met them **firstly** with faith and **secondly** with action.

Now, we find ourselves facing changes that must again be met with strong faith in God so that Christ’s wonderful Church here at 7610 Newcastle Drive in Annandale may enable us to serve the Lord this coming year and in the years to come. For example, when I first arrived as your pastor, the average attendance at worship services was around 65 people per Sunday. Today, the average attendance in our worship services on Sundays has dropped to 40 saints. As your pastor, I have definitely failed you in terms of being able to singularly have enough charisma and charm (or whatever it is) to attract more people to worship services. And, for that, I am truly sorry.

Along with this drop in average worship attendance, our Active Membership List has dropped from 130 to 104. And, the amount of money pledged by our Active Members has dropped from an average of \$160,000.00 per year to \$100,000.00. Again, I have been unable to singularly stop these drops in membership and giving. And, for that, I am truly sorry.

By now, you may be saying to yourself, *“Where’s the Good News that Dr. Looker always tries to put into his sermons and newsletter articles? Is there something wrong with him? Has he given up all hope for FPCA?”*

Well, the answer to the first question is this: The Good News is **DEFINITELY** coming! The answer to the second question is: There is nothing wrong with me (that I am aware of). And, the answer to the third question is: **ABSOLUTELY NOT!** As a matter of fact, I have more hope and faith that FPCA will meet these and any other challenges that come our way with great faith in God, ingenuity, and bold action...all for the glory of God and to preserve and protect God’s blessed Church.

So, what is the GOOD NEWS? The Good News is that your Session has acted on your behalf to make changes in the way that we faithfully take care of Christ’s Church. Instead of hiring people to mow our 7 acres of land, we have asked for volunteers to do the mowing. Genny Looker, Art Gose, John Fennig, and Aaron Norris have all become experts in driving our Encore Z48 Zero-Turn mowers. And, from what they are telling me, they are having a great deal of fun zooming around our seven acres mowing God’s green grass. **Great news!**

We have started the FPCA Christian Childcare Center (“CCC”). Our Organizing Director, Merlin Berganza, and our current FPCA CCC Director, Elder Jennifer Stoy, have

done outstanding work (along with all of our blessed Child Caregivers) to reach the point where we have almost 45 children enrolled! As a matter of fact, God has blessed the FPCA CCC so much that it was able to generate donations to the Annual Operating Budget of \$40,000.00 in 2019 **and** will be providing \$60,000.00 in support for the 2020 Annual Operating Budget! **Also, Good News!**

In 2018, your Session members had the wisdom to change the way we structured Endowment Fund. First of all, your elected Elders changed the name of the Fund to ***“The Resurrection Endowment Fund”***. Secondly, they re-invested the \$29,000.00 that existed in a money market fund into a safe, yet more productive investment instrument. Thirdly, they designed the new Resurrection Endowment Fund in such a way that the PRINCIPAL and EARNINGS would be protected and would grow at a projected rate of 7% to 9%. And, fourthly, they designed the Resurrection Endowment Fund to produce a 5% of earnings one-time distribution per year that would be used for Christian Mission Support and further support for the Annual Operating Budget. Thanks to the wisdom of your elected elders **and** to those who have strongly approved of this new fund and the long-term ways that it will help FPCA serve the Lord long into the future (and donated generously to it in the past year), the current value of the New FPCA Resurrection Endowment Fund is \$54,583.00. **Very Good News as well!**

Also, beginning in 2019, your Session has begun to explore ways in which we may rent further space to interested faith communities looking for places to meet and worship God. So far, we have had some wonderful interviews with a number of faith communities and are proceeding (decently, orderly, and slowly) further on this opportunity. And furthermore, our First Korean Presbyterian Church of Virginia (“FKPCV”) brothers and sisters in Christ are now and will continue to contribute a Covenant Rental annual payment of between \$30,000.00 and \$36,000.00 (between \$2500.00 and \$3000.00 per month).

More Good News!

Thus, as you can see, in terms of our church’s financial well-being, your Session has responded to a large drop in pledged income with the creation of new mission-oriented, Christ-centered, and exciting sources of income for FPCA, most notably our FPCA Christian Childcare Center.

Still, although serious cuts in the Operating Budget have and are being made, FPCA will end 2019 with an estimated \$30,000.00 deficit. Now, for the past 8 years, FPCA has had deficits of varying amounts. **But**, each and every time we announced what the annual deficit was, anonymous donors stepped forward to eliminate the deficits and provide our church with the opportunity to begin the new year deficit-free. Although there is no way to know whether or not this incredible generosity will continue, your Session monitors any and all deficits carefully and faithfully responds to them with periodic budget cutting, appeals to our blessed members, and incredible generosity.

As you can see, although I have been very realistic in this article (sharing my/our warts and all), I have **by no means** given up hope for FPCA! And, I hope and pray that you have not either.

I hope you will join me in giving more of your time, talent, and financial support to FPCA (in the areas where you feel the Holy Spirit of God leading you) for the next three years. Why do I limit my request to “*three years*”? To be completely honest, I believe that during the next three years, FPCA will need a “*bridge*” of extra generosity while the aforementioned new and alternative forms of funding fill in and support the deficits and shortfalls that are constantly challenging our church presently.

I know that you will join me in thanking the members who have faithfully served on your Session in the past, who are serving on our Session now, and will answer the calling from God to serve on your Session in the future. I feel so very blessed to have worked with so many brilliant, gifted, hard-working, and faithful Christian elders while I have been your pastor. I have always been amazed by the way that the power of the Holy Spirit leads your blessed Elders to decisions that not only glorify God (which is the most important thing), but provide opportunities for FPCA to continue as a lively, joyful, loving, and faithful church located at 7610 Newcastle Drive, Annandale, VA.

Your Pastor and Friend,



PREACHING SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER 2019

September 1, 2019 *Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

September 8, 2019 *Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

September 15, 2019 *The Rev. Bill Jokela, Preaching*

September 22, 2019 *Ms. Stella Lee, Preaching*

September 29, 2019 *Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

THE SPIRITUAL LAWS: THE LAW OF PERSONAL PEACE

Greg Anderson is a cancer survivor. He was told by his doctor in 1984 that he had 30 days to live. He overcame his cancer and went on to become the founder of Cancer Recovery Foundation. The following link will take you to their website:

<https://cancerrecovery.org/about-us/>

I would invite you to visit and study the website and learn about Anderson's own experience with cancer and get help for yourself or someone you love if needed. After he was literally given a death sentence by his doctors and despite his deteriorating physical condition, he set out to contact as many survivors as he could to find out what they were doing to overcome their cancer. His writings focus on the common characteristics of cancer survivors. He sums up his approach not only to healthy living but total wellness in His book entitled **THE 22 (NON-NEGOTIABLE) LAWS OF WELLNESS: *Feel, Think and Live Better Than You Ever Thought Possible.***

He focuses on the concept of wellness and says that wellness is more than a "medical fix" but is a way of living – *a lifestyle sensitive and responsive to all the dimensions of body, mind, and spirit, an approach to life we each design to achieve our highest potential for well-being now and forever.* This is reminiscent of the words of Jesus who says, "...The thief does not come, except to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." John 10:10 (Modern English Version)

We now come to Law Number 21, the next to last of the 22 laws. This is **THE LAW OF PERSONAL PEACE**. He calls this one of the most important and lofty goals of the wellness journey. He uses biblical language to describe this inner peace, calling it "the peace that surpasses understanding." (Philippians 4:7) Anderson begins this chapter by saying that as we begin our wellness journey, we discover how much we are at war with ourselves. "We are angry over our mistakes, we resent our weaknesses, we resist fulfilling our highest aspirations." In my words, I would say we saturate our thoughts with negative self-talk. Anderson says we can resolve these conflicts by understanding and practicing the non-negotiable **LAW OF PERSONAL PEACE**. He says that "...the wellness journey holds out the high promise of inner peace," but asks, "What is this personal peace? And how can we find it?" *Personal peace is that inner, ethereal sense of emotional and spiritual well-being, the deep tranquility that comes when we can disconnect from disquieting or*

threatening thoughts. Subjective, but very real, personal peace is the grounded and connected feeling when we let go of worry, pain, stress, and fear and become mindful of life's myriad wonders. Personal peace is the knowledge that all is well, an understanding that God has everything under control, even when our world seems ready to explode. Personal peace becomes a reality when we shift our focus from problems we cannot solve to a higher vision of hopefulness.

He says that two ways to totally rob oneself of inner peace are to worry about the “what ifs”: *What if I get sick? What if I run out of money? What if the car runs out of gas?*, and to obsess about regrets of the past, what he calls the “if onlys”: *If only I had taken better care of myself then I wouldn't be sick. If only I lived in a different part of the country.* He says to experience inner peace we have to dismantle our personal roadblocks beyond fear of the future and regrets over the past to include, among others, envy, impatience, rigidity. To be caught up in these distractions is to rob ourselves of the potential of wellness.

He then goes into a detailed way to pursue inner peace through prayerful meditation. He explains that “...prayerful meditation helps us shift our attention to the present moment and to control our mind and spirit. It brings us back home. Now we can let go of our cares and become open and aware of the divine presence.” He adds, “I know of no other effective way to attain personal peace.” He then explains his own approach to prayerful meditation. He says that this experience almost always allows him to find the peace that he seeks. He talks about the problems of being distracted just by the conflicts of everyday living and that it does take work.

He makes the bold claim that by knowing inner peace we can become peacemakers and help spread peace to our neighbors and to the world.

I want to mention two more links that could be helpful for those dealing with cancer. The first is about the story of a young man who was healed of colon cancer. It is chrisbeatcancer.com. The second website is thetruthaboutcancer.com. Both sites contain links to further resources for dealing with cancer.

My next article will be the last article of this series. It will be on **Part 8. The Greatest Law, THE LAW OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVING.**

Submitted by Bill Jokela, Parish Associate, FPCA



September 29, 2019, 10:00AM

Join us for this special worship service on the last Sunday of each month, as we create a worship environment for all ages: from cradle to rocking chair!

What is special about the Family Worship Service?

- The Praise Team of the FPCA will be leading hymns during the service.
- FPCA-Christian Childcare Center children will sing Christian children's songs under the leadership of Music Director and Director of Family Ministries.
- After the children's sermon, children's activities will follow in a classroom.

THE POTTER'S HOUSE MINISTRY

Dr. Chris Looker, Senior Pastor at FPCA, will offer a beginners' pottery class from **September 12 to October 31, 2019, on Thursday morning, from 10 AM – Noon.** The class, structured for complete beginners, is open to all: Dr. Looker can help those with some (or much) throwing experience to improve their skills. Register online (FPCAAnnandale.org).

Tuition remains a voluntary donation of \$15 per session (\$120 total, 8 sessions). All donations pay for clay, tool replacement, and equipment upkeep.

The Potter's House will present its second annual pottery show and silent auction on Saturday, November 16, 2019, for one hour only: noon to 1:00 p.m., in the FPCA sanctuary. Proceeds will help local and regional mission projects.

Staff Reporter

LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME
and
OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“A picture is worth a thousand words,” says the old saying, so this month our Christian Childcare Center articles splash 10,000 words onto these two pages! Quite a feat, don’t you agree?

We hope the parents of these wonderful children, as well as our church members and friends, will vicariously enjoy the revelry of our toddlers and older infants. They loved these lively Water Days during the height of summer. These candid photos say it all, no captions needed.

Jennifer Stoy (aka Miss Jennie)
CCC Director





SESSION HIGHLIGHTS JULY/AUGUST 2019

July 21, 2019

Dr. Chris Looker opened the stated meeting on July 21, 2019, with prayer, thanking God for the worship service and the return of a long-absent member. He asked God to let us be able to live out Paul's words that we can do all things through Christ.

The 2020 Stewardship Campaign Ad Hoc Committee is preparing for this fall's campaign, and plans to address the budget deficit using a first draft of the proposed 2020 budget from the Administration and Finance Commission.

A motion was passed to accept the resignation of Elder Joshua Musih.

Stella Lee stated Vacation Bible School went well with 20 children. She is planning a special family worship each month on the last Sunday.

Dr. Looker reported that Aaron Norris is replacing potentially faulty circuit breakers, as mandated by our insurance company.

Dr. Looker asked how we might find rental (church) groups to use our church.

Dr. Looker announced plans for a self-supporting mission trip in 2020.

Dr. Looker closed the meeting with a brief prayer.

August 25, 2019

Dr. Chris Looker opened the stated meeting on August 25, 2019, with prayer, thanking God for Lois Nashorn's leading the congregational singing of a new anthem. He asked that we accept change as it comes, change being inevitable.

The Session approved a pottery show, to be held on November 16, 2019.

The proposed 2020 Operating Budget was discussed, and the deficit noted.

A request from the Source of Truth Pentecostal Church to rent space was discussed. Dr. Looker, Stella Lee, and Elders Jen Stoy and Carol Gage formed an ad hoc committee to address the STPC's needs and meeting time(s) request.

Dr. Looker closed the meeting with prayer, thanking God for volunteers. He asked God to help us release those in chains.

Carol Gage
Clerk of Session

MEET FELLOW CHRISTIANS: ROBERT RAIKES

By Marta Strada



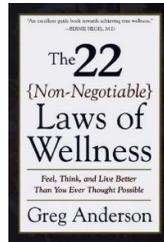
Robert Raikes, English philanthropist, was born in Gloucester September 14, 1736, and baptized 10 days later. In 1767 he married Anne Trigge. They had three sons and seven daughters. An Anglican, Raikes was a pioneers of the Sunday School Movement.

Some Sunday schools already existed at this time, but he helped to develop the system. Raikes had inherited his father's publishing business and moved it into The Robert Raikes' House. In 1780, Raikes started a special mission outreach to boys in the Gloucester slums. He was interested in prison reform, believing it wiser to prevent vice than try to cure it. Schooling was the best intervention, and the only time was Sunday, since boys worked 6 days a week. The textbook was the Bible, and the original curriculum started with learning to read and then progressed to the catechism. When the movement began, only boys attended, and the older boys coached the younger ones. Within two years, several schools opened in and around Gloucester.

Raikes described the original schedule for the schools: "The children were to come after ten in the morning and stay till twelve; they were then to go home and return at one; and after reading a lesson, they were to be conducted to Church. After Church, they were to be employed in repeating the catechism till after five, and then dismissed, with an injunction to go home without making a noise.

Some disagreed with Raikes, fearing the Sunday schools would weaken home-based religious education, and even desecrate Sunday, and even become subservient to political propagandism. The movement was still recommended as, "No plan has promised to effect a change of manners with equal ease and simplicity since the days of the Apostles." By 1831, Sunday schools taught 1,250 children. Raikes passed away in 1811; his influence on the Sunday School lives on.

FPCA LIBRARY CORNER



A new book has joined our library: *The 22 (Non-Negotiable) Laws of Wellness: Feel, Think, and Live Better Than You Ever Thought Possible*, by Greg Anderson (613 A). The author is the co-founder and chairman of The American Wellness Project. He states that everything we think, say, feel, and do has a direct impact on our physical and emotional health and that we overlook this fundamental truth every day. Anderson is “a man on a mission,” as founder of Cancer Recovery Foundation International, whose mission is to help people prevent and survive cancer.

Diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer in 1984, with 30 days to live, Anderson refused to accept this and began to interview those who had overcome cancer. Much alive today, he is a leading wellness authority who has written 8 books.

🌸 🌸 🌸 HAPPY BIRTHDAY! 🌸 🌸 🌸

John Anderson ~ September 14
 Hugh Iwanicki ~ September 14
 Barbara Matos ~ September 14
 David Wynn ~ September 15
 Elisha R Musih ~ September 16
 Susan Hanson ~ September 17

Dana Jackson ~ September 20
 Tariq Javed ~ September 20
 Roger Stevenson ~ September 21
 Laura Hall ~ September 25
 W.C. Hester ~ September 29

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR JOYCE SIMMONS

Joyce Simmons, beloved church member, passed away peacefully at home on August 15, 2019, after a long illness. A memorial service for Joyce will be held at 10:30 AM on September 7th, 2019 in the FPCA sanctuary.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Come one, come all to the monthly Men's Breakfast!
Saturday, September 7, 2019, 8:30 AM, Room 105
GREAT FUN AND FELLOWSHIP!

BOOK CLUB

Tuesday, September 3, 2019, at 1:00 PM, in the library
We will discuss Toni Morrison's "Sula" and "The Mercy"
We welcome new members!

THE WIRED WORD

Lively Sunday School lessons based on contemporary issues
Begins Sunday, September 22, 2019
11:30 AM 12:30 PM, Room 105
Moderated by Sandy Mori

BELLS CHOIR

Practice begins Tuesday, September 10, 2019, at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary
New ringers welcome!
See Director Betty Clark for more information

CIRCLE

Wednesday, September 18, 2019, at 2:00 PM in Memorial Chapel
Mary Martha Circle now joins Priscilla Circle
This year's study: "Love Carved in Stone"
An in-depth consideration of the Ten Commandments
If interested, please call Ruth Hartman, 703 321 8063

PUSH PAY (ONLINE GIVING)

PushPay is SO 21st century!
Keep up with church events and news online
Learn more: www.FPCAnnandale.org.

SHEPHERD'S CENTER NEWS

Day Trip to National Security Agency's National Cryptologic Museum

Date: September 12th, 2019; Fort Meade in Annapolis Junction, Maryland

10:00 AM: Board bus at United Baptist Church, 7100 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA.
Transportation and tour: \$25. Lunch on your own. Call to reserve a spot.

Annual Oktoberfest! Celebrate with us!

Date: September 21st, 2019 (Saturday), 11:30 am - 1 pm; Timberman Masonic Lodge , 6911 Columbia Pike, Annandale, Virginia 22003

Kings Park German Band and a delicious German feast of Bratwurst, German Potato Salad, Red cabbage with apples, Sauerkraut and German Chocolate Cake.

Lunch and music: \$20. Alcohol will not be served this year. Call to reserve.

Shepherd's Center Office: 703-941-1419; e-mail shepherdscas@vacoxmail.com.

LOOKING AHEAD TO NOVEMBER:

THE POTTER'S HOUSE will present its second annual Pottery Show and Silent Auction on Saturday, November 16, 2019, for one hour only: Noon -1;00 PM, in the sanctuary. All pottery is made and donated for the glory of God, and all proceeds will be donated to the Mission Fund for local and regional missions.

CONCERT SERIES

First concert in our 2019-2020 season is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, November 24, 2019, to celebrate completion of major organ renovations.

DUE DATE: September 23 for October 2019, FIRST and ForMOST. Please e-mail your submissions to Marta Strada, LUXI7777@verizon.net. Thank you.