



FIRST and ForMOST

First Presbyterian Church of Annandale

January 2021

FROM YOUR PASTOR



“The land you are about to enter ...is a land of hills and valleys...a land that the Lord your God looks after. His eyes are always on it, from the beginning of the year to its end.” (Deuteronomy 11:10-12)

Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'" (John 11: 25-26)

After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the Children of Israel stood on the threshold of the unknown. The Land of Promise would not be easily won; battles as well as blessings lay ahead. But the Lord promised to go with them as their shield and protector.

At the beginning of a new year, we are reminded that we, too, stand before the unknown. What will happen in 2021? What surprises, changes, needs, disappointments and delights will be ours in the next twelve months?

We know that there will be both hills and valleys! The terrain will sometimes be rugged and sometimes refreshing. There certainly were both hills and valleys in 2020! But thanks be to God, we were able to keep our faith strong in the same loving God who delivered the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage through the Great Exodus...who provided for the Israelites while they were in the desert roaming for 40 years...

We were able to strengthen our faith in a loving God who became one of us in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World...who lived a life that sets forth the example of a Godly life which, though we cannot ever achieve as perfectly as Jesus Christ did, still remains the goal for all humankind...and who died on the Cross and rose up from Death to reveal the Resurrection to all humankind.

We were able to worship Online and in person during the China Virus Pandemic of 2020. Even while the Covid 19 Virus spread throughout the world, sickening and killing thousands, devastating economies, and frightening billions of people, we continued to be Christ's Church here in Annandale, Virginia.

We did things that we had never done before. We learned how to Live Stream our Worship Services! We “*met*” for Bible Studies, Church Meetings, and Sunday School Classes using Zoom! And, eventually, we were able to come back to God’s Sanctuary to worship God on Sunday mornings. Thanks be to God!

We did not give up as a church! We did not give up as Christians! And, we did not give up being God’s Resurrection People!

That is what we are. We are *People of the Resurrection*. And, death and suffering in this world pales into insignificance when we keep our eyes upon Jesus Christ and believe that once this life here on earth is over, a new and glorious eternal life will begin in heaven. As St. Paul wrote in I Cor. 15: 55, “*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*”

And so, I invite everyone to include among your New Year’s Resolutions a commitment to begin each day by asking Jesus to share that day with you...to keep seeing with *Resurrection Eyes* as we look at a beautiful world. I urge us all to hear with *Resurrection Ears* as we listen to others, especially those who are in need of Spiritual and/or material help. I plead with everyone who reads these words to love with *Resurrection Hearts*, which starts with forgiving others and forgiving ourselves.

God wants to spend time with us **and we need to spend more time with God...all of us.** So, let me suggest that everyone set their Alarm Clock for a few minutes earlier each day and spend those extra minutes enjoying the Lord, reading scripture and praying. And, while you’re at it, how about reading a different translation of the Bible in 2021. Let the freshness of a modern translation startle you with new clarity. I suggest the *New Living Translation* or *The Message*.

Let us ask God to speak to us through the Scriptures and through prayer. Is there a command to obey, a promise to claim, an example to emulate, a principle to live by, a sin to forsake, a truth to contemplate?

Ask Jesus to show you specific ways to apply what you have just read to whatever lies before you this very day. Ask Him to give you a sense of what He wants to accomplish through you! And then let him help you accomplish it!

But, most importantly, please keep **LOOKING FOR THE RESURRECTION IN EVERYTHING AND EVERYWHERE!**

It's there. It's everywhere!

And, it will **always** bring Good News into your life...no matter how difficult your life gets.

Happy New Year and God bless you all!

Your Friend and Pastor,



Dr. Chris Looker

PREACHING SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY 2021

First Presbyterian Church of Annandale

January 3, 2021

The Rev. Bill Jokela

January 10, 2021

Dr. Chris Looker

January 17, 2021

Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

January 24, 2021

Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

January 31, 2021

Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

LOOKING AHEAD TO FEBRUARY AND MARCH

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL OF YOU!

LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME

Please enjoy these photos of our youngest Christian Childcare Center darlings. We hope you enjoy seeing them in these candid photos, captured during a normal day. Don't they look alert?!

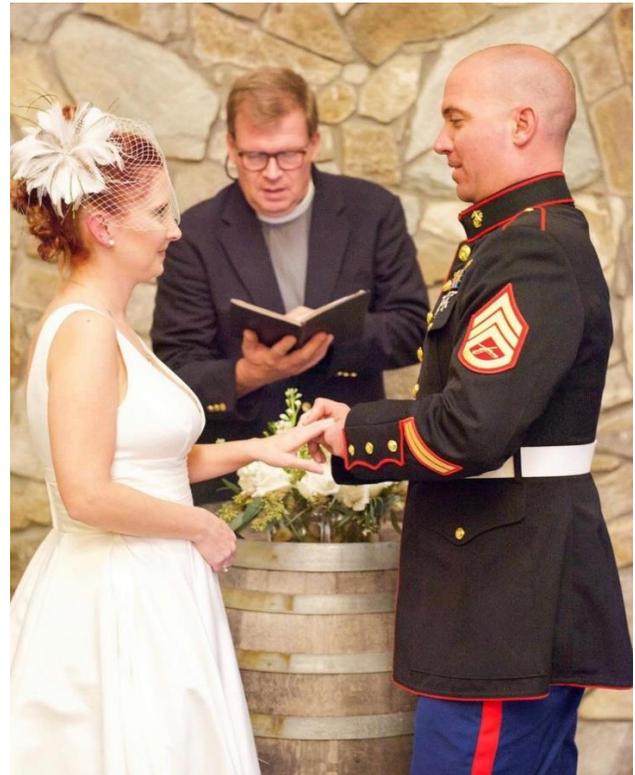
May you have a wonderful new year in 2021! May you experience the Love of Jesus Christ and rest in the security of that Love. We are so glad you're here with us. You enrich our lives.

Jenn Stoy, CCC Director
Aka Miss Jennie





KATIE FULLER AND REID PATTERSON WEDDING



Katie Fuller & Reid Patterson were married after Thanksgiving, with Pastor Looker officiating. The wedding was held at Blue Valley Winery in Delaplane, VA. The wedding was small due to COVID restrictions, but the well-wishes flowed, nonetheless.

Submitted by Pat Fuller

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

The Stewardship Committee and the Administration and Finance Commission wish to report to the blessed Members and Friends of the First Presbyterian Church of Annandale that a TOTAL of \$91,000.00 has been pledged to support our blessed church in 2021. While this is \$9000.00 short of our Projected Goal of \$100,000.00, we are all overjoyed by the incredible generosity and faithfulness of our FPCA Members and Friends. Thank you!

In addition, the FPCA Stewardship Committee wishes to apologize to the members and friends of FPCA for the error that was made on the yellow ***“2021 Seeds for the Future Fund”*** Pledge Card that was mailed to all our members and friends of the church. By the time that the deadline arrived for the Stewardship Committee to mail out the Stewardship Packets (i.e. Pledge Cards, etc.), the final 2021 Projected Operating Budget had not been completed and approved by our Session and the final plans (i.e. job description and salary plans) had not been finalized for the termination of the Director of Family Ministries Position and the opening of the new Pastor-In-Training Position.

What resulted was that the Stewardship Packets were mailed out with correct information, **except** for the information that was printed on the ***“2021 Seeds for the Future Fund”*** Pledge Card. On the errant ***“2021 Seeds for the Future Fund”*** Pledge Card, it was written that money pledged to the ***“2021 Seeds for the Future Fund”*** will be used to help the church pay for the new Pastor-In-Training Position that has been created and which Ms. Stella Lee will be filling beginning on January 1, 2021.

While this was the plan when the Stewardship Packets were distributed and mailed out, it later became more obvious to the Session that the increase in revenue coming at the end of 2020 and in 2021 from the our Covenant Churches renting space here at FPCA would make it possible for the Pastor-In-Training Position (and all other Staff Positions – Pastor, Administrative Assistant, and Organist) to be funded entirely out of the 2021 Annual Operating Budget **without** the need to use ***“Seeds for the Future”*** funds.

Thus, the Stewardship Committee wishes to notify all of our FPCA members and friends that whatever money is pledged to and/or remaining in the ***“Seeds for the Future Fund”*** will be used for the next ***SEED*** that God plants here at FPCA.

In Revelation 21: 5, the Lord proclaims from His heavenly throne, “Behold, I am making all things new.” This begs the question from all of us, “What NEW seed is God planting right now that will need funding from our Seeds for the Future Fund?”

Let us pray for the wisdom to trust in God’s ability to “make all things new” and to discern what new “seeds” God has planted here at FPCA.

Your Stewardship Committee

NEW FIRST and ForMOST EDITOR

After faithfully serving for years as editor of “FIRST and ForMOST,” our church newsletter, Elder Marta Strada has passed the editorship to Carol Gage. Carol had been helping with the newsletter for some months, so this seemed a natural progression.

If you feel called to help with the production of the newsletter, especially the folding, taping, addressing, and mailing, please let Carol Gage know. This process takes one person approximately three hours; several volunteers complete it much more quickly.

Is there information you’d like to see in the newsletter? Please tell Carol Gage. If you wish to contribute, please note each month’s due date for submissions. We especially welcome candid photos of general interest to our church members and friends!

Thank you for your ideas and for volunteering!

Carol Gage, Editor

DUE DATE: February 17, 2021, for combined February-March 2021 issue of FIRST and ForMOST. Submissions: Email to clgage@runbox.com AND office@fpcannandale.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BOOK CLUB

Tuesday, January 5, 2021; 1:00 PM; Memorial Chapel
We will discuss “Glass Houses” by Louise Penney.
We welcome readers!

THE WIRED WORD

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

STATED SESSION MEETINGS

Sunday, January 17, 2021; 11:30 AM
Sunday, February 21, 2021
Via ZOOM

DECEMBER SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

December 2020 Highlights were unavailable
as Session met after the printing date
They will appear in the February-March 2021 issue

PRISCILLA CIRCLE

Priscilla Circle is taking a sabbatical until September 2021

SHEPHERD’S CENTER ANNANDALE-SPRINGFIELD

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

PASTORAL CALLS: TEXTING

The Rev. Bill Jokela is offering
texting for pastoral calls