



**First Presbyterian Church**  
of Dunn, North Carolina

# FIRST WORDS

JULY 2017

A Community of Christians Serving God through Faith, Family,  
Fellowship and Outreach.

[Visit our Website](#)

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## A Note From Our Pastor



Summertime in our church is something like a annual sabbath. We spend about 6/7th of the year working hard on our regular programs— Bible studies, children programs and fellowship dinners every Wednesday Night, Sunday School classes for every age, youth group meetings twice a week, and all kinds of other special mission projects. But as the weather heats up for the summer, things tend to cool off a bit around the church. Our youth and children's ministries take a break from meeting regularly, Sunday School becomes intergenerational, and our councils hold off their meetings for a month or two.

But when the Bible talks about sabbath, it isn't just talking about taking a break. It's talking about setting aside time to grow closer to God and one another— and this is perhaps my favorite thing about ministry in the church during the summer.

Over the last two weeks, I had the opportunity to serve as the worship and music leader at the Massanetta Middle School Conference in Harrisonburg, VA. Massanetta is a summer gathering of presbyterian middle school youth groups from all over the east coast. The conference is held four times each summer, and each conference has about 300-350 young people, who together sing, dance, pray and read scripture, growing deeper in faith and closer to one another— just what sabbath is meant for. My job at Massanetta was to lead the kids in singing every morning and every evening. I've been playing guitar and leading praise and worship for our denomination's youth conferences for quite some time, and I'm always honored to have the opportunity. We had a group of 7 young people from our church attend the conference the first week, and I pray this sabbath time together was as impactful for them as it was for me.

This week, 16 of our high school young people are attending the Montreat Youth Conference in Montreat, NC. Montreat is the big sister conference to Massanetta — a gathering of Presbyterian high school youth groups from all over the country. Montreat holds the conference six times each summer, each one with about 1000-1200 attendees. I hope you will join me in holding our young people and their advisors in your prayers this week.

And then finally, when our high schoolers get back, we'll have a sabbath time set aside for our youngest kids as well, as we kick off Vacation Bible School. This year, VBS will serve children ages 2 to 11. This will be my first VBS at First Presbyterian Church, but I'm already excited. There is no greater joy in ministry than watching the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of children.

These summer "sabbath" opportunities are critical to the life of our church and our young people. Not only are we nurturing our youth and children in God's love, reminding them of who they are and whose they are, but we are also helping them to grow closer to one another. When a kid goes off to Montreat, she comes back knowing she belongs to something much bigger than herself, or even bigger than First Presbyterian Church of Dunn. She is connected to a larger communion of saints, people of all times and all places who are bound together in Jesus Christ.

I am thankful for this time of summer sabbath, and as you enjoy your summer sabbath as well, I pray that we might all grow closer to God and to one another.

Peace and Grace

Rev. Howard Dudley

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### *A Music Moment*



#### *Do I Hear America Singing?*

The captors demanded songs of the captured. The people lamented, "How can we possibly sing the songs of our God and homeland while forced to live here in this foreign land?"

The thought was inconceivable to them. They simply could not sing. They could not strum the harp. No song of praise or even lament could be on their lips. Their great sorrow could only be expressed by purposeful silence—not a forced song. Sometimes the only response to overwhelming grief is

silence.

During this month when American citizens rightfully sing of their freedom and love of country, there are countless refugees, exiles, and captured people around the world who cannot sing of freedom or even of hope of any return to normalcy in their homeland. They may more readily connect with the cry of the Israelites. "By the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!'"

How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land”? The plight of such people groups around the world is not meant to dampen the celebrations of America’s July 4th holiday. Actually, this psalm is a reminder of how grateful we should be that we have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as our nation is not currently plagued with war. There should be no lack of song and thanksgiving to our God for His mercy extended to the United States of America. Don’t think we should see any harps hanging on the trees here.

And believe it or not, some of the Israelites were able to pick up their harps again and sing. Some were allowed to return to Zion. Want to guess what they did when the wall around their city was rebuilt? Nehemiah records that there were “songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, harps and lyres.” (12:27) The long silence of sorrow erupted into a very loud rock band. Even that was not enough, Nehemiah further writes, “I had the leaders of Judah go up on top of the wall. I also assigned two large choirs to give thanks” (12:31) Wow! Two large choirs with an accompanying band of cymbal players, harps, lyres and trumpets (12:41). This was an extremely loud anthem of jubilation. “And on that day they offered great sacrifices, rejoicing because God had given them great joy . . . the sound of rejoicing could be heard far away.” (12:43)

Despite the sin curse that is upon all humanity, America has reason to sing. We have hope in God and His grace. We have freedom in which to work and rest. Our voice of rejoicing should be heard from far away—not because we are superior to other people groups or nations, for God is the Creator of us all. Rather our rejoicing should be heard by others as a witness of God’s mercy and grace. Would that other nations hear America “singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.” (W. Whitman)

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### **From the Weekday School**

The Mother’s Morning Out program is very active during the summer session! Eleven students are in the program and teacher Beth Smith and assistant Karli Campbell have many fun activities planned. They are doing “Fishy Art” as they study about the ocean, they do summer crafts each week, and have enjoyed an ice cream day. Each day begins with play time outside if it is not too hot. It’s a great summer in Mother’s Morning Out at First Presbyterian!



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## ***Announcements***

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### **Appalachia Service Project**

An adult missions trip to Jonesville VA has been selected for 2017. Through the guidance and direction of Appalachia Service Project, ASP, volunteers provide much needed repairs to homes. The goal of ASP, “Warmer, Drier, Safer,” can only be met through the actions of volunteers. First Presbyterian Church of Dunn can play a role in assisting those in need. Please plan to remain after the morning service July 9 to learn more about serving. To learn more about ASP, [see the ASP website](#). See you July 9!

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# Vacation Bible School

## CREATED BY GOD



## BUILT FOR A PURPOSE

VBS Kick-Off... Sunday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>...5:30-6:30 PM  
Registration & Hot Dog Cookout for Everyone

VBS.....Mon-Wed, July 24—26<sup>th</sup>.....9:00-12:00  
Ages 4 years through rising 5<sup>th</sup> graders  
NEW! Modified Nursery VBS ages 2-4

Fellowship.....Wednesday, July 26<sup>th</sup>....6:00 PM  
Games, Ice Cream & Music for Everyone

### Summer Intergenerational Sunday School

June 4—August 27

Light Breakfast and Coffee

Fellowship Hall

**June 11—Aug 27.....The Wired Word Lessons**

Discussion of current events to be analyzed in a biblical context  
How to apply scripture passages covered each week to daily life.  
(Children's Activities will be provided.)

**Sept 3<sup>rd</sup>.....Labor Day Weekend.....NO SUNDAY SCHOOL**

**Sept 10<sup>th</sup>.....Rally Day.....Resume traditional Sunday School**

# Congratulations



James Walker Green born June 14, 2017 to James and Julie Green. 8 lb. 10 oz. Big brother Mason. Proud grandparents are Anne & Cotton Johnson and Randy and Claudette Green. All are doing great!

We are also happy to announce the marriage of Jennifer Hatley and James Hill! Jennifer and James were married June 18, 2017 at Sunset Beach. Congratulations!



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## Prayer Concerns

Amy Bass  
Hazel Godwin  
Edward Lewis  
Bill Turner

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## July Birthdays

Harris Pope -----1  
Doris Suggs -----4  
Hugh Bradham -----5  
Will Pope -----5  
Maggie Stewart-----7  
Elizabeth Hales -----7  
Owen Hales -----7  
Luke Hales -----7  
Susan Hatley -----8  
Jason Colmenero -----9  
Billy Ray Godwin -----11  
Emily Powell -----14  
Jackson Pope -----19  
Jerry Rawls -----20  
Mary Myres Pope -----21  
Page Jackson -----22  
Jackson Warren -----23  
Ryan Godwin -----25  
Lindsey Malone -----25  
Kendall Tart -----27  
Winnie Smith -----29  
Barbara Godwin -----30  
Ignacio Pozos-Neri ---31  
Reid Johnson -----31



Interested in upcoming events at FPC? Be sure to check out our [online calendar](#) on the church website!

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**Nursery Attendants**

July 16  
Matthew & Carrie Smith  
Charlie & Beth Stevens

July 23  
Clark & Rebecca Hales  
Gerald & Kathy Hatles

July 30  
Harry & Betty Byrd  
Tilghman & Paula Pope

August 6  
Jason & Morgan Colmenero  
Susan Hatley

**Acolytes**

July 16 - Connor Wood  
July 23 - Palmer Foster  
July 30 - Cole Stevens  
August 6 - Whitley Turner

**Deacon Greeters (July)**

Kevin Allen  
Faye Jackson  
Morgan Colmenero

**Elders at the Door**

July 16 - Willie Suggs  
July 23 - Courtney Williams  
July 30 - June Green  
August 6 - Matthew Smith

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