



Forest Lake Presbyterian Church



HEAD, HEART AND HANDS IN THE SERVICE OF CHRIST

Newsletter Volume 64, Number 2

January 20, 2021

Dear Friends,

As I write this, the inauguration of our new President and Vice-President are about to get underway. With the events of the last few months behind us, I am sure that you join me in praying for a peaceful transfer of power and that our nation might not split into irreconcilable camps, but instead find a way forward that allows us to be unified for the common good even if we disagree on much.

I am praying for peace. I am praying that cool heads will prevail, and that both parties will give up the past practice of retribution. In Galatians 5 the Apostle Paul calls us to use our freedom in Christ to love each other. “Do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.” Galatians 5:13-15. I fear that two major parties and the many sub-groups in our country are on the way to devouring one another.

But even as we pray for peace, I want to challenge you to consider the relationship between your faith and your politics. I am firmly convinced (and have lots of Scripture to quote if I had the room) that our faith is always lived out in the political realm. By that I mean that what we believe affects how we spend our time, our money, our influence, and our vote. How we spend our money is a political decision. How we spend our time and attention are political decisions. Political decisions allow us to affect the world around us. The Christian faith is always political, but we must guard against becoming partisan. To be partisan is to claim God for “our side alone.” To be partisan is to collapse our Christian beliefs with any one political party. The Christian faith is not bound by either the Republican or Democratic party but calls both parties to accountability. The Christian faith pledges ultimate allegiance only to God. We are grateful to live in a country that provides us so many gifts, advantages, and blessings. Love of country is a good thing. But love of country, or love of a political party, or ultimate allegiance to any person over and above God is sin – specifically idolatry (see Deut 5:8 and Exodus 20:4). We can argue over partisan issues, but our politics (how we spend our time, money, vote and influence) are directly related to our relationship with God. And it is that ultimate allegiance to God that keeps our excesses and our sin in check. Those who attacked the capital on January 6th were misled and were wrong. Their political action showed an allegiance to that which is not true. When we can agree on the Lordship of Jesus Christ and when we give to God our ultimate obedience, then we can see that destruction of property and threatening physical harm to elected leaders is wrong. We can and we must be politically active Christians, and we may identify in our political action as Republicans or Democrats, but we must refrain from the partisan devouring that currently passes for politics on both sides. And if you ask me what that looks like or how I know where the divide is between being political and partisan, I will read you the list of the very different descriptions of the outcomes of serving our own egos/ourselves versus serving God that is spelled out in Galatians 5:19-26.

Let God’s Peace begin in our hearts and spread to everyone we meet.

Peace,

Ellen

Ellen Fowler Skidmore

*Forest Lake Presbyterian Church
6500 North Trenholm Road
Columbia, SC 29206
(803) 787-5672
www.flpc.org
Office Hours: M-Th: 8:30—5:00
Friday: 8:30—1:00*

*Proclaiming the good news of God's love in
Jesus Christ, to build a fellowship of
Christian Love, and to serve this
community and the world in the spirit
of the Servant Christ.*

Please Pray For . . .

Mission Co-Workers

- * Rev. Mark Adams & Miriam Maldonado Escobar- Mexico
- * Rev. Shelvis & Rev. Nancy Smith-Mather - RECONCILE Peace Institute
- * Mamonyane Mohale- Ministry of Hope- Lesotho

PASTORAL CARE NUMBERS

Ellen Skidmore - 803-463-7586 (cell)
E-Mail: ellenskidmore@flpc.org

Eric Skidmore - 803-543-9859 (cell)
E-mail: zacchaeus@sc.rr.com

Ed Black - 803-240-0192 (cell)
Email: edblack@flpc.org



STEPHEN MINISTRY



Forest Lake Presbyterian Church is a Stephen Ministry congregation!

If you feel like you or someone you know could benefit from a one-to-one, confidential, caring Christian relationship, please contact:

Wayne Harris at 790-0954 or cell 608-1187 or wcharris1973@gmail.com

Margaret Harris at 790-0954 or cell 608-1477 or mmck1950@gmail.com

Bettianne Davenport at 782-6256 or Cell 530-6018 or bettianned@sc.rr.com



Sympathies of the Congregation are extended to:

- * Patsy Brown on the death of her nephew Dr. Randy Hawkins.
- * Erlinda McCoy on the death of her father, Ricky Barlongo on January 12, 2021.
- * Bill Wannamaker on the death of his uncle, Butch Bellinger, on January 18, 2021.
- * Rev. Eric Skidmore, on the death of his uncle, Mike Skidmore, on January 10, 2021.
- * Friends and family of Charlie Frick, who passed away on January 19, 2021.



2021 Offering Envelopes

Envelopes are located in the downstairs lobby. If you would like envelopes and don't see a box with your name on it, please contact Shannon Fancher at 803-787-5672 or shannonfancher@flpc.org.

December 2020 Financial Update

Annual Budget	\$ 811,062
YTD Budgeted Expenses	\$ 811,062
YTD Actual Income	\$ 796,567
YTD Actual Expenses	\$ 705,672

Budget details are available in the downstairs lobby.

Memorial Gifts made in December

Buford Goff
Carol Josey
Sally O'Bradovich
Joel Pate
Evelyn Saleeby
Earl Sifford
Lois Suggs

Honoraria made in December

Pat Pate
Staff

The 2020 FLPC Annual Report will be posted on our website under News and Events until the end of the month.

Would You Like to Join a Small Group?

If you didn't have a chance to join an H3 group in the fall, we have some groups who will be starting a new curriculum soon. If you would like to join a group, please contact [Jodi Beckham](#). We have groups meeting at various times, some in person, some over Zoom, so we would be happy to find a group for you!



More Soup Needed

If you plan to make some soup over the next week, please consider putting any extra into one of our soup containers (empty containers are located in the old kitchen). While our soup pantry is getting low, the good news is we've delivered more than 40 containers since November. Questions? Contact Ed Black: edblack@flpc.org

Capital Campaign

At the Session Meeting held December 13, the Session approved moving forward with the Capital Campaign. As you may recall, this campaign was put on hold last March due to the pandemic. This was after a very successful Feasibility Study that at that time resulted in over 90 families identifying they would financially support the Capital Campaign. You may also recall that the projects for the Capital Campaign totaled \$1,001,000, which included a 10% benevolence component. (The projects may still be found on our FLPC website.)

The plan for the Capital Campaign is to request pledges through the end of May 2021, and then begin the three-year program starting July 2021 and ending at the end of June 2024. Pledge payments will be over that same three-year period. As with other campaigns, the amount pledged will determine the final list of projects. The pledging, the project list, project management, and campaign financials will all be monitored by Session during this campaign.

FLPC has already received over \$200,000 towards the campaign. Some folks have found themselves in a good position and have donated in advance of the formal campaign. Any pledge donated this year or any time prior to the start of the campaign will be credited towards your Capital Campaign pledge.

You'll hear more about the Capital Campaign as 2021 moves forward.

2021 Endowment Grant Proposals Due by March 15th!

The FLPC Endowment Fund expects to have around \$60,000 to distribute in 2021 to support the causes of the Kingdom of God! Do you have an idea for a project that would "expand and enrich the mission of FLPC"? Our Endowment Fund provides money in response to grant requests and is especially interested in projects that are local and mission oriented. If you would like to initiate a request for funds, do not delay. Endowment projects must be approved by a Session Ministry or the Board of Deacons before being submitted. Speak to any of the church staff or to Elder Dave Precht, who is the new chair of the Endowment Committee, for more information and the grant proposal form. If you have an idea, we are happy to help you with the process of submitting a proposal.

Local Mission – What Can I Do?

Our Christian faith is rooted in love and Jesus calls us to act out of that love. *“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Faith by itself, if not accompanied by action, is dead.” James 2: 14, 17*

There are many local organizations Forest Lake Presbyterian Church supports with financial contributions and volunteers. If you are looking for a place to help, here are a few. Can't volunteer time? Consider writing a letter of support, thanking them for their hard work in the Columbia community or contributing financial support. Questions contact: Jodibeckham@flpc.org.

Cooperative Ministry – <https://www.coopmin.org/volunteer> - Volunteers are needed for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, Clothing Bank and front office, contact Rhemie Gantz, volunteer coordinator, (803) 799-0932, rgantz@coopmin.org. Have a car (any condition) to donate? Cooperative Ministry would love to have it!

Family Promise – <https://www.familypromisemidlands.org/> - Volunteers are need for office help, organizing supplies. Contact Jeff Armstrong at jeff@familypromisemidlands.org, (803) 832-4765. Or help with our hosting weeks at FLPC, contact Linda Byrum, byrum1@yahoo.com or Christi Cooper, ccooper@lottandsearcy.com.

Rehoboth Food Pantry – Volunteers are needed for food pantry organization. Contact Bill Rose 803-778-2220. Donate food – drop off in one of our downstairs collection boxes at church.

Oliver Gospel Mission – <https://olivergospel.galaxydigital.com/> Volunteers are needed in their thrift store, administrative support in the office and in their new coffee shop, the Roastery.

Transitions – <https://transitionssc.org/volunteer/> - Volunteers are needed to serve meal to clients, provide general assistance in the clothing closet, library, computer lab, or leading a class (resume writing, budgeting, mock interviews, fitness, music, writing, hobbies). Contact transitions@transitionssc.org, 803-708-4861

Harvest Hope – <https://www.harvesthope.org/get-involved/volunteer> - Donate food or volunteer your time at their food bank. This link will give you more information on their many volunteer opportunities and schedule of what is needed when.

Centennial ARP Soup Kitchen – Make sandwiches with our church group approximately 6 times a year. Contact Millard Zink, mzcu59@gmail.com, or Kay Hampton, kjhampton55@gmail.com for more information.

Homeless kits - Keep a homeless kit in your car for when you encounter someone on the street asking for assistance. These kits contain a water bottle, general hygiene items, bus passes and information on where to find the local soup kitchens. These kits are for sale downstairs at church for \$3 which covers the cost of making them.



Cafe Justo for Valentines!

Order tasty coffee in beautiful gift bag (free) now - and know that you're also making a difference in the lives of Mexican coffee growers with every purchase. Contact: Rowena Nylund, rnylund@sc.rr.com, 803-252-7752

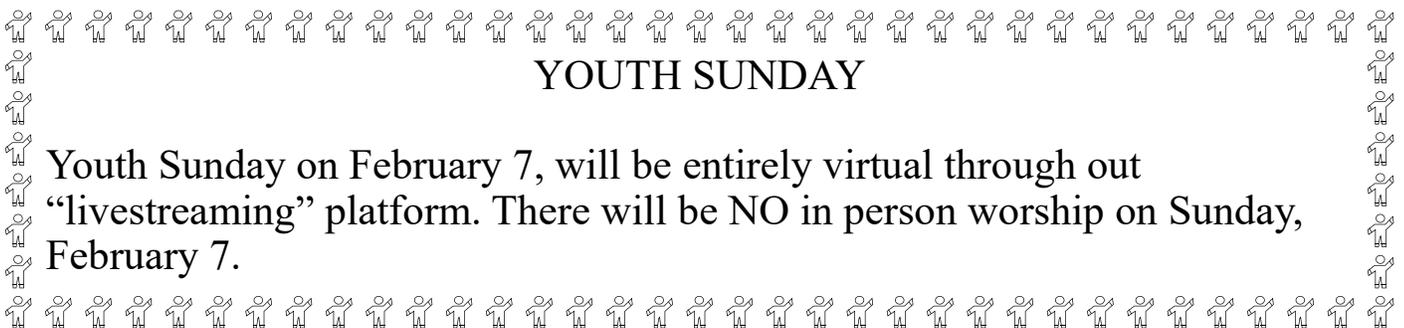


Notes from the Stated Session Meeting – January 17, 2021

- Moderator Ellen Skidmore held an orientation for new Elders and a refresher for continuing elders in basic information and decision making processes.
- Session approved making \$66,880 available from the FLPC Endowment Fund. This amount is determined by a formula approved by Session each year in January. Endowment Fund Requests must be approved by a Ministry of FLPC and turned into Elder Dave Precht before March 15, 2021.
- Session approved all special congregational offerings and collections for 2021.
- Session approved all congregational communion dates for 2021 and January of 2022.
- Stewardship and Administration reported that the church is in very strong financial position with a surplus at the end of 2020. The Church received slightly less in gifts and pledges than we had anticipated, but this is very likely to do the pandemic and uncertain economy. While pledged offering was down, other giving was higher than expected. Session is grateful for the stability and generosity of this congregation, and they agreed to continue under our 2020 approved budget limits and to ask all Ministries to evaluate what they may/may not be able to spend because of the pandemic and communicate that to Stewardship and Administration. The Session approved using a portion of last year’s surplus to do three things:
 - To put the balance of the Property Budget that was unspent into the Capital Reserve Designated Fund. The HVAC system in the Fellowship Hall must be replaced and Property is working on a plan for how to pay for that. This surplus money will be part of that plan.
 - To give the staff a one-time 8% bonus. No raises were given for 2021, but the surplus allows Session to express appreciation for the innovation and hard work that our staff have given the congregation.
 - To hold over the balance of the discretionary benevolence line (\$982.66) that was not given away in 2020 so that they may give it outside of FLPC in early 2020.

The balance of the 2020 surplus will be held and Session will continue to reevaluate our financial position and ask Session to approve mid-course corrections if needed.

- Session received the Independent Accountants’ Report on Applying Agreed-Upon Procedures that The Hobbs Group conducted on our 2019 financials. Where there were exceptions noted, the Church Treasurer and Business Manager wrote responses and proposed changes to strengthen our internal financial controls.
- Session approved the 2020 Church Statistical Report that details our membership and financial data from the last year. This report is filed with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) each year.
- Session elected Marshall Brown and Wayne Harris, from the Session class of 2023, to serve as members of the New Member Commission.
- Session elected Jessica Agee and Jeff Binnicker to serve as commissioners to the Stated Meeting of Trinity Presbytery on Saturday, February 13th and elected Marshall Brown as an alternate commissioner.
- Session approved a schedule of Session Council Meetings, Session Meetings and made assignments for devotions as a part of every Stated Session Meeting for 2021.



YOUTH SUNDAY

Youth Sunday on February 7, will be entirely virtual through out “livestreaming” platform. There will be NO in person worship on Sunday, February 7.

