

First Light

Monthly Newsletter Publication

September 2020

David McConnell-Booher's Progress on His Seminary Education

We have exciting news on David's progress to become an ordained Christian Minister of Word and Sacrament! He has been selected to receive the Fullers Resilience Grant for the fall of 2020! This is a one time gift made possible by the generosity of a small number of Fuller supporters who are committed to encouraging and supporting student resilience and persistence in their studies at Fuller University. This \$850 grant will help offset some of the costs associated with his education. I would like to remind everyone that each course costs between \$1,500 to \$1,700.

This is a wonderful opportunity for our church members to be exposed to the educational requirements to become a minister. David has completed the following courses: Introduction

to the Old Testament, Introduction to the New Testament, Practices of Vocational Formation, and The Churches Understanding of God and Christ in its Theological Reflection. He has received a Grade A in each of these classes. He is just finishing two more classes, The Church's Understanding of the Church, Humanity, and the Christian Life in its Theological Reflection, and Theology and Film.

David continues to do outstanding work. We ask all of you to consider helping him to keep moving forward with his goal by praying for him, and if possible, to donate to the Seminary Reserve Fund to help him pay for his education.

Respectfully,
Jack Schnurr

**In Recognition of the Labor Day
Holiday, the Front Office Will Be
CLOSED
Monday, September 7, 2020**

In This Issue

- Status of David's Seminary Education
- Invitation to Small Group Bible Study
- Celebration of 10th Anniversary of Youth Director
- Upcoming Events
- Who Are You Leaning On?
- Message From Our Elders
- Acknowledgement of Birthdates

HOSEA 10:12

*Plant the good
seeds of
RIGHTEOUSNESS,
and you will
harvest a crop of
love.*

Why Attend A Small Group Bible Study?

Getting involved in small group Bible study enriches our lives and develops our faith. For some, joining a small group Bible study can seem intimidating, time consuming, or simply not important compared to other obligations. Life is busy with our families, careers, and “things to be done.” For a variety of reasons, committing to a small group Bible study often falls at the bottom of one’s “To Do” list. You may wonder if it is worth it.

But people who are part of small group Bible studies develop intimate friendships, feel more connected to their church, and have a support system they can depend on for prayer and encouragement. As we journey through life, and especially when we face battles, having a close group of fellow Christians to support us in prayer and presence can make all the difference. Attending a small group Bible study outside the Sunday service creates a deeper connection within the body of Christ.

Small group Bible studies lead to transformation, learning about faith, becoming a people of prayer and study, and connecting to God. Small group Bible studies can be a catalyst for significant life change. Being in a small group will leave you filled up and ready to do good works of faith. You’ll gain a deeper understanding of the Bible as you study it with other believers and are able to apply it to your life: how you think, act, and what you say. When you become a part of a small group, you will have a chance to not only be encouraged, but to encourage others who want to deepen their faith and live faithfully. You can discuss more about what you’ve heard in the Sunday morning sermons and what you’re learning about God. As a group, you get to dig into God’s Word and read Christian books that give further insight into our faith and how to pursue a deeper relationship with the Lord.

The Christian walk is not intended to be a “Lone Ranger” experience. A theme that runs throughout Scripture is that being in community with other believers is truly important in our lives. The early church is an inspiration, and provides us with rich wisdom and examples about how to connect with other believers, and how to be the body of Christ. When we feel isolated and lonely, pursuing Godly friendships can be the way out. Being part of a small group Bible study can give you the connection you long for, and the support you need when you go through troubles, setbacks, or trials. We need other Christians in our lives to challenge us, support us,

and help us understand what it means to live a life for Jesus. We cannot sharpen ourselves; we need others to do that. The Holy Spirit works through other believers to help refine us, and a small group Bible study is often the ideal place for real and lasting spiritual transformation to take place.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Why Facilitate A Small Group Bible Study?

Because facilitating a small group Bible study is tremendously rewarding. It enhances your own embracing of the material, your relationship with God, and your heart for ministering to others. Whether you have been attending Bible studies for years, or are relatively new to studying the Bible (as opposed to reading the Bible), this is an opportunity to take the next step. You do not have to have all the answers, all you need is the willingness to facilitate a meeting of believers to study and discuss God’s Word. You will not be alone; God will be with your group.

“For where two or three gather together in my name, I am with them” (Matthew 18:20).

If you are interested in joining and/or facilitating a Bible study, either an in-home Bible study or a “Zoom” Bible study, please contact me (Jim Aldrich) at jwaldrich@gmail.com. I can help you get started and also find people interested in meeting. We have materials available to help you. Bible studies can involve: a discussion of the sermon from the previous Sunday; a discussion of a Bible book, chapter or verse; watching and discussing a DVD on a biblical topic; reading and discussing a book on our Christian walk; or just about anything else that encourages us in our walk with Christ. Don’t hesitate, jump in. Contact me today.





Come Celebrate With Us!

Sunday, September 27
(After the Worship Service)

You are invited to attend a celebration of David McConnell-Booher's 10th Anniversary as Director of Youth Ministries at First Presbyterian Church. David and his wonderful wife, Brenna, have both been devoted members of our congregation ever since he joined the staff on July 1, 2010. Due to COVID-19, we had to delay our plans for an earlier celebration of David's ten years of ministry at FPC, but now a date has been set, so please **mark your calendars** and plan to come celebrate with us!

David has been and is a great Youth Director! He has touched the lives of so many teens, in meaningful, life-changing ways, over these past ten years. Even during the recent, challenging times related to the coronavirus, there has continued to be a core group of youth who look forward, twice a week, to connecting with David (whether in person or on-line) for times of study, service and fellowship.



Throughout this past decade, David has been a very dedicated member of the FPC staff. Within the last 18 plus months, he has taken on many extra pastoral duties, such as assisting at nearly all of the worship services, preaching at least twice a month, supporting our elders, deacons and other staff members, doing home visitations and more. Where would we be without all the technical support David has provided to help get our worship services recorded on-line? How thankful we are for all the ways he has graciously served us, even while being enrolled in two courses for the past few months!

There will be opportunities to share our thanks with David when we gather on **Sunday, September 27.** Cards or notes expressing appreciation to him are most welcome. (A box will be available to place them in.) We also want to bless David (and Brenna!) with a generous gift. If you'd like to contribute toward this gift, please place your donation in the offering plate by Sunday September 20th.....or mail it to the church..... or drop it off with Marta in the church office. Be sure to mark on it: **For David's 10th Anniversary.**

FPC Personnel Team and Hospitality Team

UPCOMING EVENTS



Now is the time to plan your vegetable garden for next summer. Find out how to successfully grow all kinds of vegetables in Alaska's interior as well as how to cook and store them. The 8 weeks class, taught on-line by Terry Reichardt, runs from 6 til 8 p.m. on Mondays, starting September 28. Sign up for the class by calling 1st Presbyterian Church at 452-2406.



The Well

Beginning September 23rd, 1st Pres will once again offer a Wednesday night dinner to the community. However, because of COVID-19 and the guidelines for dealing with it, we will only be able to offer take-out meals. While this means we will not be providing the usual opportunity for fellowship and prayer, offering a good meal once a week is our way of saying to our neighbors that we care about you and that God cares about you.

The success of this ministry depends on contributions from volunteers. We need ideas for nutritious, tasty take-out meals, help with meal preparation and distribution, and clean-up. This is a great way to get involved with the life of 1st Pres and to love our neighbors.

If you want to be involved, contact Paul Reichardt
(907-347-3214; paulreichardt@gmail.com).

Who Are You Leaning On?

For many of us, this has been a tough season. The ongoing pandemic, concerns for justice and peace in our nation, personal setbacks, the record-setting wet and gloomy summer, or some combination of all these factors have led to us feeling stressed, challenged, or even overwhelmed. When we feel that way, it is crucial to pump the brakes; to slow down, take some deep breaths, and re-focus on what is most important. Paul Reichardt mentioned in his sermon last Sunday on 1 John 4 how so much of what is wrong in our lives can be traced back to an improper ordering of our priorities. We are called to put Christ first, others next, and ourselves third. While this may sound like a bigger challenge than putting ourselves further up that chain, there is a miracle at work that can be easily ignored. Jesus Christ declares that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. In other words, when we put Christ as the first focus in our lives, our burden is lighter and the Love of God is at the center of our life; we might think life gets harder when we start serving God and neighbors before serving ourselves, but it's actually far easier. This allows God's love to radiate outward into the rest of our lives, putting all of our other responsibilities, thoughts, and feelings into the proper perspective. My encouragement to all of us when we feel uncertain, overwhelmed, or just stressed is to slow down, re-examine your focus, lean hard on Christ Jesus, and everything else will begin to fall into its proper place.

David McConnell-Booher



What follows is a short summary of the decisions and actions of the Session, at the August 18, 2020 Session Meeting. The minutes of the meeting will contain a more complete record.



The Session of First Presbyterian Church met, virtually via Zoom at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, August 18th.

The meeting was opened by Ruling Elder Jim Aldrich with a devotion based on the topic of Peace.

Minutes from the July 21, 2020 Stated Meeting, August 3, 2020 Special Session Meeting, August 12, 2020 Special Session Meeting and vital statistics from July 22nd to August 18th were received and approved.

Consent Calendar items were passed with one item being moved to New Business. The Consent Calendar items included: Approval of the minutes of Deacons Meeting: June 23, 2020 and increasing Marta Conner's work hours to 40 hours per week.

Online Facebook Sunday Services streamed live and the sound quality of Sunday services uploaded to YouTube were discussed. Feedback from those watching indicates that the sound quality when streaming on Facebook live is far better than that of services uploaded to YouTube. However the video on Facebook is restricted to the pulpit. The topic will be placed on the agenda for the September Session Meeting. In the meantime, David McConnell-Booher will be soliciting input from video production professionals.

Plans for online attendance at General Assembly by elected commissioners Mikki Holt and Stephanie Rozell were discussed.

Ruling Elder Barb Page and Clerk David Dreydoppel were elected as Commissioners for the online Presbytery Meeting in October.

A proposed contract for the prospective candidate for Director of Spiritual Care was discussed, amended, and passed.

A written Financial Report was provided to Session by the Church Treasurer.

The Chair of Stewardship & Finance has requested that all Ministry Team chairpersons submit the first draft of their committee budget to her by September 14th.

Reports from the Ministry Teams were received.

Elders spent time in prayer. After making prayer requests known, elders prayed for one another and for First Presbyterian.

The next Stated Session Meeting will be held on September 15, 2020 at 6:00 pm in the Church Conference Room or if needed via Video Conference.



4

Dan Wells

6

Mark Lawson

7

**Josephine Papp
Shannon Riggs**

9

**Vern Canada
Sherry Dudgeon**

10

**Norman Klann
John Purcell
Ben Logan
Sarah Logan**

11

Wanda Bowder

12

Alan Sims

13

Sandy Hoak

14

Rachel Perkins

15

Quivaq Hoak

17

Scott Marney

18

**Patty Greimann
Rick Stovarsky
Jason Riggs**

19

**Nancy Dreydoppel
Mark Wartes**

20

Kil Whiteman

21

Anarrakaq Hoak

22

**Debra Lynn Bush
Kathryn Sorrels
Adelaide Wietgreffe
Catherine Mathews**

24

Donald Putgook

26

Hannah Denton

28

**Meredith Nava
Rachel Marney**

29

**Scottie Klann
Sage Gates
Lorena Sims**

30

Julia Solomon