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# FIRST WORD

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## The Monthly Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Lenoir, North Carolina

No. 11 of 2019, A.D.

November, 2019

### WORD FROM THE SCRIPTURE

2 Thessalonians 1:2-4 The Message (MSG)

**1** <sup>1-2</sup>I, Paul, together with Silas and Timothy, greet the church of the Thessalonian Christians in the name of God our Father and our Master, Jesus Christ. Our God gives you everything you need, makes you everything you're to be. <sup>3-4</sup>You need to know, friends, that thanking God over and over for you is not only a pleasure; it's a must. We *have* to do it. Your faith is growing phenomenally; your love for each other is developing wonderfully. Why, it's only right that we give thanks. We're so proud of you; you're so steady and determined in your faith despite all the hard times that have come down on you. We tell everyone we meet in the churches all about you.



"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

# **HANDBOOK TIPS**

## **PRESBYTERIAN ORIGINS**

### **(1) Reformed Churches**

Presbyterians are part of the whole household of Christians. We are part of a family called Reformed churches. These churches began in the sixteenth century at the time of the Protestant Reformation. They were churches that looked especially to the teachings of Huldrych Zwingli of Zurich (1484-1531) and John Calvin (1509-1564), who lived in Geneva, Switzerland, as being reliable ways of understanding and interpreting the Bible. Other Reformed leaders followed. They wanted to “reform” the Roman Catholic Church on the basis of the Word of God in Scripture.

### **(2) Protestant Churches**

Reformed churches became distinguished from Lutheran churches, which followed the teachings of Martin Luther (1483-1546), who had also sought the “reformation” of the Roman Catholic Church. Reformed churches also followed a different path from those who became known as Anabaptists (today’s Baptists, Mennonites, and others) since Anabaptists believed that only adults who profess their faith in Christ and not infants should be baptized. Lutheran, Reformed, and Anabaptists are all “Protestants” in that they do not agree with the Roman Catholic Church. In England, Anglican Churches (Episcopal churches in the U.S. today) emerged as a middle way between Catholicism and Protestantism.

### **(3) Presbyterian Churches**

Presbyterian Churches get their name from their form of church government: government by presbyters or elders. The primary governing unit is the presbytery, which is composed of clergy and elected lay leaders (elders) in a specific geographical area. The elders who govern in local churches are called the session.

The Presbyterian Handbook, 2006, Geneva Press, pgs. 87-88

**THE LIFE OF OUR CHURCH -  
PASTOR INSTALLATION**



**THE LIFE OF OUR CHURCH -  
SPECIAL WORSHIP MUSIC**



**Mr. Miguel Pico, classical guitarist, native of Columbia, South America, led in music Sunday, October 13, 2019.**



**Beth Ann's installation as pastor of First Presbyterian, Lenoir, October 6, 2019.**



## SERVING AT THE SOUP KITCHEN



October 13, 2019. Lynda Renegar, Ann Sime, Beth Ann Miller, Drew Fox, Sonny Hines, Janes Harrison and Harriet Hines.



Rev. Dr. Brian Blount Presents “The History  
of Racism in the Reformed Tradition”  
October 12, 2019.



## PASTOR'S WORD

At the October Session meeting, the session voted to become a Matthew 25 Congregation. The 222<sup>nd</sup> and 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assemblies (2016 and 2018) challenged the PC(USA) to embrace Jesus' call in Matthew 25: 31-46 to take our living faith into our communities and the world. As a Matthew 25 church, we are called to live out true discipleship by acting boldly, compassionately and fearlessly serving people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor.

Churches are asked to embrace one of three areas of focus – building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty. The Session has chosen to focus on dismantling structural racism.

We actually began this focus over a year ago when we studied Jim Wallis' book America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege and the Bridge to a New America. We will be joining with Dulatown in the future to talk about this book using a study guide that accompanies it.

Our combined events are also a move toward inclusion and understanding.

Our lecture series furthered our focus with Brian Blount speaking on "The History of Racism in the Reformed Tradition" on October 12 and preaching on October 13.

Some of us have read and are reading other books such as Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson and The New Jim Crow by Michelle Anderson. There are many other excellent books worth reading. We will be recommending certain ones that we all can read together.

Racism is deeply embedded in the life and history of the U.S. Through colonization, slavery and a shameful history of legislative action and judicial pronouncements, our nation created and embraced a system that devalued people based simply on skin color and ethnic identity. People of color were deliberately subjugated for material, political and social advantage. Racism is the continuing and enduring legacy of this history.

We begin to confront racism by raising awareness. We need to understand further how we got to where we are, but most importantly we need to understand our own ideas and attitudes regarding others of different ethnicities.

First we ask you to read the PC(USA) church-wide anti-racism policy, "Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community," at [facing racism .org](https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/) (<https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/>). We will have a couple hard copies on hand at the church.

The session and I believe we are being called to join with others as we seek to end cultural racism. Please join us in prayer as we engage this endeavor. We believe it is a response to the second great commandment given by Christ: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Love and God's blessings,

*Beth Ann*

## PLEDGE SUNDAY

Pledge Sunday is November 10, 2019. There will be a covered-dish meal following the service. Our service that day will be a special service of readings, scripture and hymns thanking God for His provision. As a token of our gratitude we will bring our first fruits to the alter. Bring fruits, nuts, vegetables and fall leaves to fill the cornucopia. In this season when we contemplate the many ways God has blessed each of us, let us take time to prayerfully consider what our response of gratitude should look like.





## CALENDAR EVENTS

- 3 – Communion
- 10 – Pledge Sunday/Harvest Service
- 18 – Session meets
- 24 – 5-CENTS-A-MEAL collection.



## WORD IN SONG

### Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

Come, ye thankful people, come; raise the song of harvest home. All is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin. God, our Maker, doth provide for our wants to be supplied. Come to God's own temple, come; raise the song of harvest home.

All the world is God's own field, fruit in thankful praise to yield, wheat and tares together sown, unto joy or sorrow grown. First the blade, and then the ear, then the full corn shall appear. Lord of harvest, grant that we wholesome grain and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come, and shall take the harvest home; from each field shall in that day all offenses purge away; give the angels charge at last in the fire the tares to case, but the fruitful ears to store in God's garner evermore.

Even so, Lord, quickly come to thy final harvest home. Gather thou thy people in, free from sorrow, free from sin, there forever purified, in thy presence to abide; come, with all thine angels, come; raise the glorious harvest home!

Henry Alford, words; George Job Elvey, music



(2) Susie Hutchens  
(15) Bob Giduz



## Our Prayer List

Jim Cerswell (Lynda Reneger's brother)  
Brian Clark in the death of his mother  
Fred and Beth Flora  
Kelly Heafner (CJ Hartsell's niece)  
Silvio Martinat  
Will Neely (son of Bill and Wanda Neely)  
Bob and Susan Powers  
Family of Meredith Powers West (Bob & Susan Powers' daughter)  
Leo Schmidt (Carol Ann's grandson)  
Judy Scroggs  
Ann and Steve Sime  
Nancy Stevens  
Douglas Tilley (Dianne's brother)  
Anthony Uva  
Anne White (Lynda Renegar's sister)  
Joanne Triplette

Call Joanne if you have other prayer requests (828-757-8364).

