

# CHURCH CURRENTS

## JULY 2023

210 S. Wayne Street, Milledgeville, Georgia 31061

478-452-9394; fpchurch@windstream.net; www.fpcmilledgeville.org



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PRESBYTERIANS

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**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**210 SOUTH WAYNE STREET**  
**MILLEDGEVILLE, GA 31061**





# First Presbyterian Church

Issue No. 324 July 2023

Pastor:  
Rev. Susan Balfour

Coord. of Children &  
Youth Ministries:

Admin. Asst.:  
Lois Callender

Director of Music:  
Dr. Jennifer Flory

Organist:  
Kate Phillips

Child Care Providers:  
Childcare is  
temporarily  
unavailable



Rev. Susan, Wesley Applebury, Elliot Callender, Uriel Nwankwonta, Masoma Odihe, Laurie Peebles, and Josefa Tchamna spent the first week of June at the Montreat Youth Conference, and it was wonderful! The theme was "In Joy", and our keynote speakers and worship preacher explored the concept of joy with over 500 young people. It was a very moving experience, especially for our first-timers, and we enjoyed some deep and thoughtful conversations with one another. **We sincerely thank our church family for so generously supporting our fundraisers so that our youth could have this experience.** The conference was such a success, the youth have asked that we go again next year!





I am pleased to report that our participation with the Georgia Trust Expedition on June 10th was quite a success! We were able to share the history of our lovely sanctuary with approximately 175 visitors from across Georgia as well as South Carolina. I'd like to thank our historians-- Craig and Lois Callender, Mandie Respass, Rosemary Begemann and Grace Anne Azahar. It truly was a great experience. From searching throughout the church to completing the setup of our history display table, I was reminded of what a great history our church has here in Milledgeville. What great practice for our upcoming 200th Anniversary! A big sincere "Thank You" to all who helped me make this a truly proud and grand day!

Additionally, I'm still in awe of the marvelous participation I was witness to at our Celebration Luncheon on the 25th of June. I know I truly loved seeing so many of us enjoying each other. The Lord certainly gave us a beautiful sunny day after a week of plenty of rain from the heavens. I cannot begin to thank anyone in particular for their help in pulling this together as my entire congregation rose to the occasion. I'm oh so grateful to each and everyone of you.

Many Blessings, Margaret



Thank you to Grace Anne Azahar and Margaret Ivester for their countless volunteer hours cleaning the inside of the church, especially in preparation for a site visit from the Georgia Trust Expedition in early June. Also, thank you to them for hosting the visit from the Historical Society. Thank you again for the continual volunteer efforts and mulch donations from Sue and Joe Bennett. They have donated countless hours of their time cleaning, trimming and detailing the church grounds. They also bring and use all their own tools, power equipment, truck and trailer. All of that takes their own money and time to upkeep. Recently, they cleaned the western side grounds near our historic entrance along Wayne Street, as well as the playground, and have begun to landscape the southern side between our building and St. Stephens. With a few other volunteers, they have been the main church members and juggernauts responsible for restoring our grounds. Thank you!

Thank you to Margaret Ivester for spearheading our annual picnic. Our place was packed, everyone had a great time, your planning was terrific, we all ate and played well. Fantastic event Margaret!! ~Joel Respass

### A Note from the Head of Property, Joel Respass

## July Sermon Series

Reverend Susan will be starting a new sermon series this month, focusing on the seven signs of a vital congregation, as described and defined by the PC(USA) in conjunction with our status as a Matthew 25 Church. You can find more information on these signs near the back of the newsletter, but those signs are:

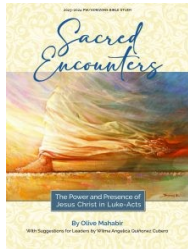


- 1. Lifelong discipleship formation**
- 2. Intentional authentic evangelism**
- 3. Outward incarnational focus**
- 4. Empower servant leadership**
- 5. Spirit-inspired worship**
- 6. Caring relationships**
- 7. Ecclesial health**

Reverend Susan will explore each sign to show how we can examine our own congregational health and improve on those places we are not strong in. There will also be a film series each Thursday evening to coincide with the sermon series that will expand on each sign of a vital congregation.



# CONGREGATIONAL FELLOWSHIP



The **Presbyterian Women's Bible Study** ended in May, but will pick up again in the fall. Information about the new study, *Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts*, is available at <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/sacred-encounters/>. The 2023-2024 PW/*Horizons* Bible study by Olive Mahabir invites readers to consider what we can learn in Luke-Acts about Jesus, "the good shepherd" (Lk. 10:15), who shared the Good News through sacred encounters with everyday people.



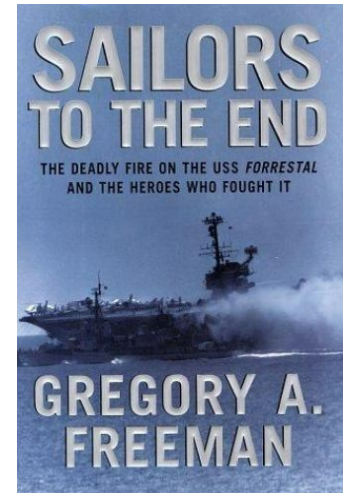
## After-Worship Receptions:

**Please consider signing up to contribute refreshments for the after service fellowship reception. If you need help setting up, let us know. We enjoy this time to reconnect with each other after worship. The sign up sheet is on the refrigerator in the kitchen.**

After Worship receptions: Our Youth can take the refreshments you provide, set up your reception, monitor it during the hour and cleanup for a donation to our fund.



The next meeting of the FPC Book Club will be held the second Thursday, July 13th at 2:00 pm. The book selection for the month is *Sailors to the End: The Deadly Fire on the USS Forrestal and the Heroes that Fought It* by Gregory A. Freeman. Through comprehensive research and interviews with the surviving sailors, the author has written a gripping story about the fire aboard the aircraft carrier, USS Forrestal, stationed in the Tonkin Gulf off the coast of Viet Nam. The crew on the carrier were preparing to launch an air bombing raid on North Viet Nam when a rocket accidentally fired from a plane into the airplane that was piloted by John McCain. McCain barely escaped from his plane before a 1,000 pound bomb exploded, causing a chain reaction of fire and bomb explosions. A huge fire ensued, trapping many pilots in their planes. After the fire was put out on the flight deck, it burned for days in the interior of the ship, taking the lives of 134 men and injuring more than one hundred sailors and airmen. The author tells the amazing story of the brave men that fought the fire that day and remembers the ones that gave their lives trying to save the ship and each other. The book selection for August is *Black Ops: The Life of a CIA Shadow Warrior* by Ric Prado, a retired CIA Counterterrorist Chief of Operations, the CIA equivalent of a two-star general. This book is a memoir by the highest ranking covert warrior to write about the shadowy world of assassins, terrorists, and spies.



It seems that the book club group has gotten onto a military bent lately, but we have selected some really interesting books that are well written and tell fascinating stories about our military history. Come join us for interesting and stimulating discussions about historical events that you may have missed. ~Mille Murphy

**Join us Sunday, July 30th to help feed our neighbors and ourselves by making sandwiches for the Milly Free Fridge.**

Please bring any of the following:

Sliced bread, lunch meat, jelly, fresh fruit, prepackaged snacks, bottled drinks. We will provide condiments and labeling materials.

**Thank you!**

As the weather turns warmer, please consider donating water for the Milly Free Fridge to help those who are un-housed and those whose water has been turned off. The need is great in our community.



## Food Pantry staples list:

Canned soups, canned ravioli, canned ham, tuna, salmon, and chicken; boxed mac & cheese, pasta noodles, grits, oatmeal, and/or cereal; peanut butter & jelly; canned spaghetti sauce, fruit, and vegetables

## Samaritan Ministry

This month, we were unable to help anyone with their utilities due to lack of funds. Please consider giving regularly to this mission as we often have to turn people away. There are so many in need.

The Samaritan Ministry help for this month is scheduled for July 18 at 9:30 am.

Also please consider giving of your time once a month. Bill could really use the company.



During June, we served 33 households through our Food Pantry ministry. Four of those were here for the first time. We have had some new sources of contribution, making it easier to fulfill the requests we get.

-Kiwanis Club meets in Fellowship Hall on Tuesdays and has collected some donations in one of our green and red baskets each week. However, I have just learned that hereafter there will be a monthly check designated for Food Pantry in appreciation for use of the space and in support of their mission to help children in the community.

-Our "youngest saints" who have just completed VBS have had an emphasis on food and have brought Pantry items each day. They will present their collection on Sunday during the first hymn. If you have something to add, they will be glad to add that to their "haul", as well.

-I was delighted at our recent Celebration Picnic to be approached by one of our guests. He said he feels there is no excuse for anyone to go hungry in this wealthy nation, and he handed me a nice check for our Pantry. Amen, Brother!

Let us all follow these great examples as we pursue God's purposes in this community. ~Donna







# July



**WE ARE A  
MATTHEW 25 PRESBYTERY**  
*Building Vital Congregations Sunday*

*Actively Engaged in the World*

2 **9:30** Sunday School  
**11:00** Worship Service  
FBLive & WKZR102.3FM

3

4 Office Closed  
**9:30-10:30** Food Pantry



9 **9:30** Sunday School  
**11:00** Worship Service  
FBLive & WKZR102.3FM

10 **6:30** PFLAG



11 **9:30-10:30** Food Pantry  
**12:00** Kiwanis  
Luncheon



16 **9:30** Sunday School  
**11:00** Worship Service  
FBLive & WKZR102.3FM

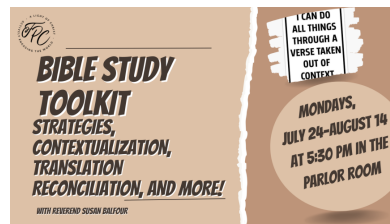
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18 **9:30-10:30** Food Pantry  
and **Samaritan Ministry**  
**12:00** Kiwanis Luncheon



23 **9:30** Sunday School  
**11:00** Worship Service  
FBLive & WKZR102.3FM  
**Sermon Series: 7 Marks of  
a Vital Congregation**

24 **5:30 Bible Study Crash  
Course**

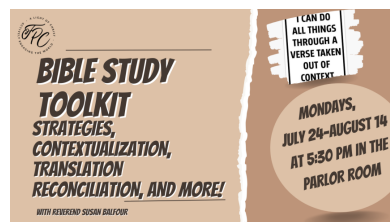


25 **9:30-10:30** Food Pantry  
**12:00** Kiwanis Luncheon



30 **9:30** Sunday School  
**11:00** Worship Service  
FBLive & WKZR102.3FM  
**Sermon Series: 7 Marks of  
a Vital Congregation**  
**12:00** Milly Free Fridge

31 **5:30 Bible Study Crash  
Course**



# 2023



			1
5	6	7	8
12 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study 	13 2PM FPC Book Club 	14	15
19 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study 	20 5:30 Vital Congregation Film Study, Fellowship Hall 	21	22
26 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study 	27 5:30 Vital Congregation Film Study, Fellowship Hall 	28	29

## Elders on Session

**Class of 2024** ~ Wesley Applebury (At Large) Jennifer Flory (Worship) Margaret Ivester (Congregational Care) Nancy Miller (Clerk of Session) Laurie Peebles (Personnel) Joel Respass (Property) Anne Smart (Christian Education) Bill Werts (Missions and Outreach)

**Operations:** The church office is now open Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
**Pastor Office Hours:** Tuesday - Friday 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Please call the office for an appointment.



## VBS 2023: Food Truck Party



Did you notice our food truck in Fellowship Hall? What a wonderful prop for our VBS Food Truck Party last week! Much Thanks to all those who helped create and paint it. Joel Respress was our creator while Ruby Werts, Teri Anne Bradley and Masoma Odihe helped with our paint job. VBS was a real hit this year thanks to Anne Smart, Rev. Balfour, Kathy Carroll, Laurie Pebbles, Nancy Miller, Joel Burns and Susy Little. Special thanks to Teri Anne Bradley for all her helping skills.

~Gloria Burns



Food Truck Party VBS was a big success. Children and Youth enjoyed singing, dancing, baking, crafts, drama, and recreation while learning about putting trust in God to provide. They also donated to the Food Pantry and Samaritan Ministry.

VBS was under the leadership of Top Chefs Gloria Burns, Kathy Carroll, Anne Smart, Laurie Peebles, Susy Little, and Rev. Balfour. Snacks were provided by Grace Anne Azahar, Sue Bennett, BJ Jones, Linda Bradley, and Donna Gautier. Special thanks to Joel Burns, Joel Respress, Nancy Miller, and Lois Callender for their contributions. A highlight was the dedication of our Rock Garden to Gloria Burns by Marion Robinson. We are grateful to our leaders and for our wonderful young saints.

~Anne Smart, Christian Education



## Rock of Ages

The landscape of the First Presbyterian Church was fundamentally changed in 2021, the Youth Group stepped on the grounds and began clearing land for a rock garden. Since then, many changes have occurred to ensure a well designed area for planting uniquely designed rocks.

The invited class consisted of the following rock painters: Masoma Odihe, Maxime Tchamna, Hannah and Uriel Nwankwonta, Emily and Teri Anne Bradley, Hannah and Leland Erickson. The requirements to secure success were met under the guidance of Gloria Burns, Education Director, and her staff of volunteers: Margaret Ivester, Ruby Werts and Marion Robinson.

Prior to midday on Wednesday, June 28, the 2023 VBS class encircled the towering tree in the vacant lot and individually placed decorative rocks. The rock scenes vary, consisting of activities and interests of the participants. Plan to detour around the SE lot before church and admire our children's creativity.

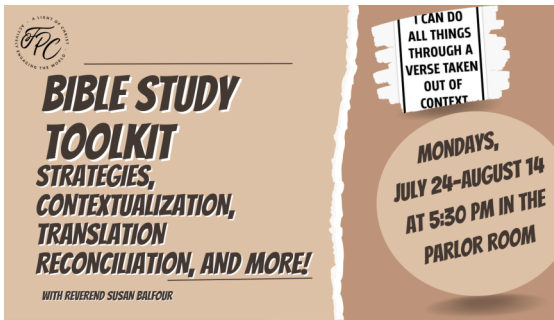
~Marion Robinson





## Bible Study Crash Course

Rev. Susan will be holding a crash course in how to study the Bible **Mondays, July 24-August 14 at 5:30 PM in the Parlor Room.** This study will help you learn the best ways to read and interpret the Word, something not always easy to do. Don't miss this incredible opportunity to expand your knowledge of the Bible.



## WEDNESDAY NIGHT STUDY

The Wednesday night study group meets in person for a pot luck supper and lively discussion. Please join us. We are still working on *Bullies and Saints* by John Dickson. This book is a fascinating review of the history of the good and evil the institutional church has caused and how it occurred. It gives us the opportunity to reflect on the times when the church followed the will of God and when it went astray. The pot luck begins at 6:30 P.M. If you do not wish to participate in the pot luck, the discussions begin about 7:00 P.M. and finish by 8:00 P.M. Please join us whether you have the book or not! The book is available on Amazon.

~Joel Burns



## FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL



We are studying *When Godly People do Ungodly Things* by Beth Moore.

This group meets in person in the parlor room every Sunday morning at 9:45 AM. We would love to have you join us. ~Bill Werts

## ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Bible Sunday School class continues to meet via ZOOM. This conveniently allows us to study and learn in an informal manner from the comfort of our homes or on our smartphones. We meet for thoughtful conversations every Sunday at 9:30 AM. We are studying the first volume of *The Collected Sermons of Walter Brueggemann* and every one of the sermons has been thought provoking. The sermons were written in the 1980s and 1990s but they are as fresh today and when originally delivered. I hope a number of you will join us. If you wish to join by ZOOM, call me at (478) 414-6516 and I will forward the link. ~Joel D. Burns





FILM SERIES

## 7 SIGNS OF CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY

Join us as we watch five films then discuss  
how they help us see the seven signs of  
congregational vitality

Thursday evenings July 20-August 24  
5:30PM  
Fellowship Hall

A small dinner will be served before we start  
the films. We will watch one film per session.

Join us on Thursday evenings starting July 20 at 5:30 for a small dinner and then a film study. This series will be looking at the seven marks of a vital congregation and is in tandem with Reverend Susan's sermon series covering the same topic. Using film to explore these topics will help us to put into action the concepts we will be learning about. All movies save one are PG, with one being PG13. We can arrange for childcare if we know in advance of the need. Please join us in this exciting new study.



## TREASURER'S CORNER

Summer is always a challenging time for church finances. We faltered a bit on our giving in June. We need to sustain our income to keep our services strong.

Please remember to contribute to the general fund, Samaritan's Fund and Food Pantry.

God Bless everyone. ~ Joel Burns

	April	May	2023 YTD
Contributions	\$22,729	\$20,382	\$111,399
Other Income	\$687	\$688	\$5,296
Total Income	\$23,416	\$21,070	\$116,695
Budgeted Expenses	\$16,477	\$20,017	\$98,094
Net (Loss)	\$6,939	\$1,053	\$18,601





# Matthew 25:31–46

## 7 Marks of a Vital Congregation



### 1. Lifelong discipleship formation

This first mark is not complacent “Christian” piety; it is not just teaching good morals; it is not simply offering the latest programs. Lifelong discipleship formation is from the cradle to the grave; it is a faith that seeks understanding; it is discipleship awakened and engaged; it is formed and strengthened in community. This first mark of a vital congregation emphasizes the need for the continual transformation of the people who come seeking it.

### 2. Intentional authentic evangelism

Jesus says: “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people” (Matthew 4:19b). This second mark of vitality is not about tricking people into believing or about luring them into membership, it is about intentionally sharing the good news that we have received and authentically showing Christ to the people around us. Gone are the days in which Billy Graham would have 3.2 million people come to hear him speak over the course of a 4-day event (Seoul, South Korea in 1973), now there needs to be a more relational one-on-one aspect to evangelism. How do you relate to those around you in this way?

### 3. Outward incarnational focus

Christine Pohl writes in *Making Room*: “If we are genuinely concerned about the needs of strangers, offering hospitality requires courage.” The total opposite of this third mark would be inward institutional survival, but unfortunately, that’s what this becomes in some congregations. Many churches are too busy navel-gazing to look out into the communities around them and see what the needs and wants are of the people they want to connect with.

### 4. Empower servant leadership

How are we empowering servant leadership within our congregations and outside of our walls? How are we empowering the next generation to understand this phrase from a faith perspective and not just a catchy cliché? After all, it was Jesus (the ultimate servant leader) who said: “For I have set you an example, that you should also do as I have done to you” (John 13:15).

### 5. Spirit-inspired worship

Is worship meant to be self-gratifying or consumer entertainment? Or is worship meant to be for God, about God, centered on God? Mark Labberton in “The Dangerous Act of Worship” writes: “Worship turns out to be the dangerous act of waking up to God and to the purposes of God in the world, and then living lives that actually show it.”

### 6. Caring relationships

This sixth mark is often the mark that congregations skip. They already think of themselves as “nice” or “friendly” or “warm” and so they assume they already have this one covered. But I often encourage them to go into the depths with this one to uncover some areas they might still need to think through what Caring Relationships are ultimately about. Is there welcome and hospitality shown to ALL? Do you have healthy practices for confronting conflict and seeking reconciliation within your community? Do you have people who make peace and build bridges with those outside of your congregation?

### 7. Ecclesial health

This seventh mark has some bulk to it and you can talk about it in terms of gaining clarity in mission or keeping core values in ministry or fiscally responsible stewardship. You can also spend time talking about the importance of knowing “why” and “how” we are a congregation and a part of the larger church.

(Taken, in part, from <https://pres-outlook.org/2021/12/7-marks-of-vital-congregations/>)



# PRAYER REQUESTS

## Church Family:

Nan Carpenter, recovering from fall  
Helen Danuser, recovering from a fall  
Debbie Lamsma, recovering from a fall

## Extended Family:

Michael Bledsoe, Mary Lucik's grandson, multiple health concerns  
Brittany Caruthers, Sunda Coleman's niece, chemo treatment  
Susan Eilers, Mary Lucik's friend, cancer surgery  
Ellen Gladin, Sue Gladin's daughter, ongoing medical concerns  
Dee Hartmann, Susan Balfour's aunt, health issues  
Karen Hartmann, Susan Balfour's cousin, double amputation  
Alonzo Kelly, Craig Callender's father, Stage 4 Melenoma  
Elizabeth Knobel, Carolyn Morgan's daughter, cancer stable  
Joanne Lambertson, family friend of Jennifer Flory, fighting cancer  
Janie Mullis, Bill Werts's son-in-law's mother, ongoing health concerns  
Julie Montemayor, Becky Henderson's mother, ongoing health concerns  
Janie Mullis, Bill Werts' son-in-law's mother, ongoing health concerns  
Joanne Murphy, Kathy Carroll's mother, mass on her colon- at Carlyle House in Macon  
Chris Pearson, Sunda Coleman's son, recovering at home; dialysis  
Runette Pounds, Sunda Coleman's mother, ongoing health concerns, recovering from a fall  
Susan Patrick Renfroe, dear friend of Margaret Ivester, caretaker of ill husband  
Willy Sanders, Sunda Coleman's cousin, ongoing health concerns  
Bob Smart, Anne Smart's husband, ankylosing spondylitis  
Windy Spaide, Craig Callender's sister, ongoing health concerns  
Mattie Stapleton, Melba Burrell's sister, cancerous brain tumors  
Randy Stewart, Haywood Edwards's son-in-law, ongoing health concerns  
Dudley Weathers, Anne Weathers's husband, ongoing health concerns

## Limited Mobility

Martha Chappell  
Helen Danuser

## Military Service

Will Deason  
Rebecca Elangwe  
(Both are Reservists)

## In Assisted Living:

George and Nan Carpenter, PO Box 527, Jefferson, GA 30549  
Nancy Holbrook, The Dublin Place, 504 Fire Tower Rd, Dublin, GA 31021  
Eloise Lamb, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place  
Maryann Morris, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place  
Jackie Northington, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place, Ste 3303  
Suzy Smith, Savannah Court, 1061 Willow Run Rd, Unit 4, Greensboro GA 30642



## Anniversaries

July 2~ Susan Balfour & Greg Thigpen  
July 22~ Cissy & John Lane



## Birthdays

July 2~ Christina Azahar  
July 10~ Jack Bivins  
July 15~ Teri Anne Bradley  
July 15~ Jude Hirsch  
July 16~ Jennifer Flory  
July 23~ Susan Balfour  
July 24~ Bill Werts  
July 25~ Joel Burns  
July 28~ Romanus Elangwe

