

HAPPENINGS

First Presbyterian Church | 1601 Main St., Murray, KY 42071 | (270) 753-6460



Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Renee A. Meyer

Clerk of Session: Carol Allen

Treasurer: George Kipphut

Administrative Assistant: Andrea French

Music Director: Kate Tombaugh

Accompanist: Christy D'Ambrosio

Campus Ministry Director: Lisa Polivick

Youth Director: Andrew Green

Nursery Attendants: Lindsay Crafton, Lexi Bergman

Custodian: Monte Fisher

Office Hours: Monday-Friday
9 a.m.-12 p.m.; 1-3 p.m.

From Pastor Renee's Desk

Peter Rollins has a powerful monologue that speaks to what it might look like to practice — or fail to practice — resurrection. Rollins begins with the intentionally shocking assertion that,

“Without equivocation or hesitation I fully and completely admit that I deny the resurrection of Christ. This is something that anyone who knows me could tell you, and I am not afraid to say it publicly, no matter what some people may think.”

After a dramatic pause, Rollins continues,

“I deny the resurrection of Christ every time I do not serve at the feet of the oppressed, each day that I turn my back on the poor; I deny the resurrection of Christ when I close my ears to the cries of the downtrodden and lend my support to an unjust and corrupt system. However there are moments when I affirm that resurrection, few and far between as they are. I affirm it when I stand up for those who are forced to live on their knees, when I speak for those who have had their tongues torn out, when I cry for those who have no more tears left to shed.”

I think Mr. Rollins makes a very significant point. As we approach Holy Week and Easter, we may easily focus a good deal on the crucifixion and the empty tomb. In my view, neither of these days tells the central story of Jesus. Sometimes I think we Christians focus an

Join Us!



Men's Breakfast

Every Wednesday
Morning at 7 a.m.

March 7, Hih Burger

March 14, Martha's

March 21, Rudy's

March 28, Cracker Barrel



Lunch Bunch

Every Thursday at 12 p.m.

March 1, Don Sol

March 8, Woody's Bar-B-Q

March 15, The Keg

March 22, Tom's Grille

March 29, Crossroads

inordinate amount of theological energy on the crucifixion and resurrection when perhaps it would be more beneficial to our faith if we would be more inquisitive about Jesus' life and ministry. This is the heart of our faith—how did Jesus live, and how, might I, as his disciple, be a reflection of the Christ who came to serve? This in my view is the crucial question. How I answer this question becomes the narrative of my living faith.

When our understanding of crucifixion centers primarily on the idea that "Jesus died for my sins," we may spend a good bit of time worrying about where we will spend eternity (heaven or hell). Framing Jesus' death this way can conjure in us a tremendous amount of fear and stress. If our concentrated focus remains on the fate of our souls we may or may not feel compelled to work for justice or peace or have compassion for our neighbor who is suffering. Of course the inclination to service varies from Christian to Christian. My point really is that, how we understand crucifixion and resurrection may, at times, have a direct correlation to what we see as most important about the faith. Our understanding will often set our priorities.

I wonder if we could perhaps serve more joyfully and other-oriented if we understood Jesus' death to be about his "NO" to the powers that be? Jesus of Nazareth said, "No, I won't back down standing beside the no-count of society; No, I won't stop loving across your established religious boundaries; No, I will not run away and hide to save my own skin;" Instead he said, "YES! the oppressed and hurting deserve healing, love, and a strong voice for change; Yes! God loves even you, Empire and Religious Elite, therefore turn yourselves into a force for good and help usher in a realm of justice and peace where all have what they need to live an abundant life.

Living a resurrected life is all about how we live and serve. A resurrected life is a joy-filled, thank-filled life where we serve Christ, not because of his death or our fears, but because of his life! We serve in response to God's overwhelming Love for

us as modeled in Jesus of Nazareth. God has more love for you, me, and creation than we have the capacity to understand. If we just could be convinced of the divine all-encompassing, unconditional love, then perhaps we would not fear what might happen to us after death. As a result we would not expend so much energy and focus worrying about the eternal fate of our souls. Fear would be abolished and deep gratitude for the truly amazing love of God would be the impetus for living a resurrected life.

I also think that, in turn, the less judgment oriented theological framework would allow those folks who right now say they are “spiritual but not religious” to be more willing to participate in a community of faith. The churches that constantly focus on judgment about heaven and hell, who’s in and who’s out, have given many of those who seek a relationship with the Divine, an understanding of the Christian narrative that is not helpful, and hence they stay away from “organized religion” (a.k.a. the church). These concerns are worth a hearing I think.

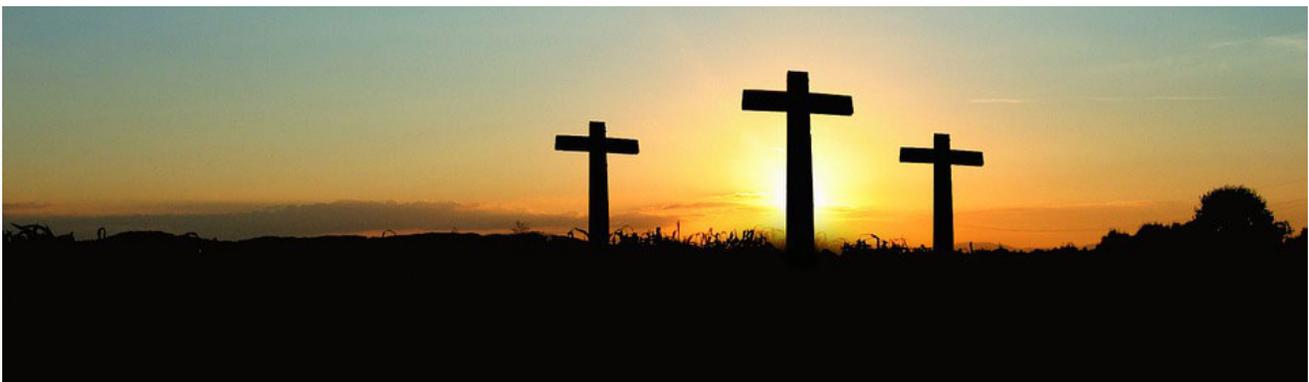
The God we rejoice in at Easter is the one who said that no one can stymie his redemptive hope for this world. The down side is that God can’t and won’t do this work without us. It is a cooperative effort between humanity and God. As part of this cooperation we are compelled to look outside of ourselves and come face to face with the needs of our families, friends, neighbors, community, and world. The workload is overwhelming. However, we aren’t expected to do it alone. That’s why we have a community of faith. It is part of the beauty of our denomination—because it is a connectional system. What one individual church cannot do, the force of 9,500 congregations together has a much better chance of doing. It takes all of us, working with God, to bring the Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

And never fear because Christ says, “And lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.”

Now go, and live a joyful and thankful life modeled after the LIFE of Jesus of Nazareth!

Shalom,

Pastor Renee





Holy Week Services

Submitted by Pastor

Renee

Anointing & Healing

On Wednesday of Holy Week, which is March 28, we will have a service of Anointing and Healing at 6 p.m. at First Presbyterian. This is a joint service with First Christian Church. We alternate locations each year. This will be our fourth year for this service. It is based on the anointing of Jesus by Mary of Bethany, who some scholars believe was actually Mary Magdalene.

Seder Meal

The Seder meal will be Thursday March 29 beginning at 6 p.m. If you can't make it right on time, then no worries, join us as soon as you can! We are excited to have Tova Shinall lead us again this year in a Seder meal. Tova is an Orthodox Jew and she has educated us in so many ways. She is very down to earth and she presents to us her tradition of the Seder. Seder, for those unfamiliar with it, is the Jewish tradition based on the story from Exodus about how God led Moses and the enslaved Hebrew people out of Egypt. It is a ritually and symbolically infused recounting of the Passover—wherein the angel of death “passed-over” all the Hebrew families and saved them, while causing much pain and grief for all others. Food is very symbolic in the meal, as it is used to demonstrate aspects of the Exodus story. This is an intergenerational event, so all ages are welcome. However, we will have a nursery for those who would like to make use of it at any point in the evening.

Good Friday

Finally, at 7:30 p.m. on Good Friday, March 30, we will have a dramatic presentation. It will be a service of Shadows. This is a powerful drama that presents some of the people that were affected by Jesus' ministry. We hear snippets of their stories as they intersected with Jesus and how they may have felt as they came into contact with him as he made his way to Golgotha to be crucified. The dramatic action freezes and the narrator leads the congregation through a short, guided-reflection, then the action resumes and on it goes to the end. It is a service you will want to attend. Because it is a darkening service, we will begin at 7:30 p.m., so that it will be completely dark when we end.



**PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN**

Submitted by Ann Stanley

Our Women to Women supper was well attended and we thank everybody who helped make this a success! Our speaker, Becky Lile, was so informative and is a powerful voice for women in poverty. Our next meeting, Monday, March 5, will be a brown bag lunch with Marion O'Rourke as our guest speaker. Marion will give us some history of the Presbyterian Women's group in our church. Bring a brown bag lunch and come listen to Marion and the information she has gleaned from her mother, Beth Belote, and others. Kathie Fleming will be our hostess that day. See you at 11:30 a.m.!

Dorothy McKenzie Circle

The Dorothy McKenzie Circle will meet at 1 p.m. on Monday, March 12 at First Presbyterian Church. We are continuing our study of "Cloud of Witnesses", chapter 6. Each chapter is separate, so you may join us at any time and be able to follow the discussion. We welcome visitors and others wishing to join us. Cheryl Pittman will be our hostess that day!



Soup for the Soul

Submitted by Ann Stanley

Our next time to host at Soup for the Soul is Monday, March 19. If you are interested in serving your community in this capacity, or would like to know more about it, please text or call Ann Stanley at 270 293-7049, or email at asjstanley33@twc.com.

Beth Belote Circle

Beth Belote Circle members will replace our customary first-Thursday-of-the-month meeting with attendance with the Lenten Reflection series--also scheduled for Thursday evenings from 6-7:30 p.m.

Wednesday Night Live: For People of All Ages

Submitted by Debbie Batteiger, First Christian Church

March Schedule:

March 7: 5:30 p.m. Wednesday Night Live at First Christian Church: Kentucky author Deane Renshaw will talk about her life growing up in

Kentucky and the books she has written.

March 14: 5:30 p.m. Wednesday Night Live at First Christian Church: Russia Night! Sophie Dunham will give a presentation about Russia, the country where she was born. We will eat some Russian food (borscht, pierogies), learn about Russia, and see some Russian dances (and maybe even have a Russian dance contest). The meal will begin at 5:30 p.m. and the program will be at 6 p.m.

March 21: 5:30 p.m. Wednesday Night Live at First Christian Church: St. Patrick's Day/Irish Potato Night! Come, wear green (even though it is a few days late) and celebrate the great patron saint of Ireland, Saint Patrick, and enjoy feasting off a baked potato bar. Following the meal there will be potato games.

Youth Director: Andrew Green; 270-978-1527; andrewgreen12@gmail.com.



March MOTA Calendar

March 1 —Fun times at the MOTA House

March 8—No MOTA

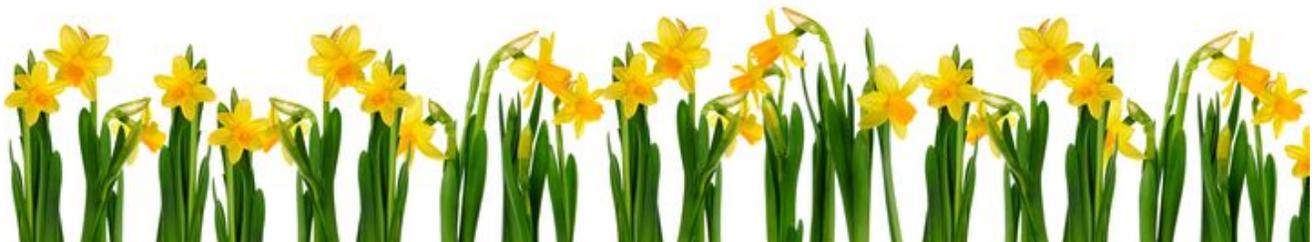
March 10—Tennessee Safari State Park in Alamo Tennessee

March 15—Get ready for coffee outreach project

March 16—Coffee by Curris Center

March 19-25—Murray State University Spring Break

March 29—Maundy Thursday service then back to MOTA House



Lenten Reflection Series Continues

Submitted by Renee Meyer

Our Lenten Reflection series is off to a nice start! Everyone is invited to join us as we explore opportunities to make a difference in the world. Each Thursday features a different guest speaker from various service/non-profit organizations that not only serve people locally, but around the globe. They will give us opportunities to ask questions and share with us how we might get involved in their particular organizations if so desired.

A meal of soup and salad will be provided. We are asking that folks give \$5 per person up to a maximum of \$15 per family of 3 or more.

Here are the remaining presenters and their organizations:

March 1: Mark Hurt leads 12 step recovery programming and will also tell us about Near Town (sober living for men), a new residential center for men dealing with addiction.

March 8: Jennifer Riley will talk about the new Homeless Coalition and also Soup for the Soul.

March 15: Angie Mills from Laundry Love, a ministry that believes that through the neutral space of a Laundromat, every guest and stranger can become a friend. This idea tears at the labeled constructs of “us” and “them” and erodes the societal, economic and cultural divides that separate people.

March 22: Angela Boyd will speak about the important work being done through CASA on the Lakes.

Please invite your friends and neighbors to join us! One does not have to be part of a religious organization to appreciate how these organizations help and serve humanity.

An Update from your Outreach Committee

Submitted by Shirley Latto

Do you remember those bitterly cold days in January and February, when the temperature dropped as low as three degrees, and caused so much trouble with frozen pipes and water mains in our area? Those temperatures, combined with the heavy snows that came in the middle of January, have caused a significant (albeit temporary) increase in heating bills. Our church office has also seen a significant increase in referrals from Need Line, from folks who are needing assistance with their monthly rent, utilities, and electric bills. From January 1 through February

21, 2018, our office provided assistance to 25 families totaling \$1,584.26. Please keep in mind that assistance is given only to those who have gone through Need Line and have been vetted following their income guidelines and regulations.

Our Pastor's Discretionary Fund has been valiantly trying to meet these referrals but sadly, we had to notify Need Line at the end of February that we could not accept anymore requests at this time. Our yearly budget for this Pastor's Discretionary fund was set at \$1,000, which allows just under \$85 to be deposited each month.

When we thoughtfully submit our pledge cards each year, we generally do so thinking that this will be our contribution toward meeting the needs of the church and toward our efforts to help others in our community. However, because this has been an unusually harsh winter and the need for assistance has been greater, we have been unable to provide the necessary assistance for the folks who need it the most. Personally, I have seen my own utility bills increase in the past two months, and this makes me think of the families who are perhaps working two, maybe even three jobs and are barely able to make ends meet. For these families, any added expense can mean the difference between having heat, electricity, food, medicine, and in some cases, even a place to live.

If you would like to make an additional donation (above and beyond your regular pledge) to help these folks in need, please make your check out to FPC and on the memo line add Pastor's Discretionary Fund.



Financial Report

From the Stewardship Committee

When our mortgage was retired in December, there was a balance of \$5500 remaining in the Building Fund. This amount has been transferred to our Capital Fund which provides funds for major repairs to our facilities.

2018 income as of January 31 —
\$11,260

2018 expenses as of January 31 —
\$16,360

For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.



Easter Breakfast Potluck

Submitted by Val Heath

Easter Sunday, April 1

9:45 a.m.

Please bring your friends and family!

A sign-up sheet will be located in the narthex.

Contact Val Heath with any questions.

270-925-6067



First Christian Church Spring Spiritual Retreat 2018

Submitted by FCC Pastor, Rev. Dr. Ruth Ragovin

“The Changing Seasons of our Lives”

Saturday, March 24, 2018

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Location: Camp Kum-Ba-Ya, 4943 Barge Island Rd, Benton, KY 42025

Cost: \$15 (this includes beverages/snacks, lunch, retreat materials, camp rental fee)

Retreat Leader: Rev. Dr. Ruth Ragovin

The book of Ecclesiastes states that “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven (3:1).” In the circle of life, the world cycles through the seasons of winter, spring, summer, and autumn as the earth moves from being a tomb, as things lie dormant under

the earth, to becoming a womb as this same earth births new growth in a brilliant resurrection of life. This same life force that propels the external seasons also pulses through our individual lives as we too move through various internal seasons.

During this day-long retreat, to be held among the beauty of nature at a lakeside retreat center, we will explore the valuable lessons and wisdom that each of these seasons can teach us as we apply them to our own lives. We will be helped in this by the writings of Parker Palmer, Marjorie Thompson, Joyce Rupp, Marcina Wiederkehr, and Thomas Merton. We will engage in times of personal reflection and journaling as we allow ourselves to be inspired and challenged by poets including Wendell Berry, Mary Oliver, Tagore, e e cummings, May Sarton, Nami Shihab Nye, Rumi, David Whyte, and John O'Donohue.

Come and allow your souls to be refreshed by the beauty of nature, encouraged by the wisdom we can glean from both the external and internal landscapes of our lives, and renewed by a day away from the stresses of our everyday lives! To register, please email fccmurray@gmail.com or call 270-753-3824. Those who would like to carpool from Murray, may meet in the parking lot of First Christian Church no later than 8:15 a.m. Registration fees may be paid the day of the retreat.

March Birthdays

Margaret Purvis, March 7
Kate Tombaugh, March 10
Terry Foreman, March 12
Donna Leigh, March 19
Brett Eisenhauer, March 21
Dave Howe, March 28
Brittany Hesson, March 29
Charlotte Gregory, March 31
Jerry Stanley, March 31

March Anniversaries

Sue and George Cochran, March 12
Tonie & Tim Belcher, March 19





Prayer Concerns

*“Blessed be God, because God has
not rejected my prayer
or removed God’s steadfast love from me.”--
Psalm 66:20*

Church Members and Regular Attendees

Bill Schell	Recovery from Surgery
Dan Moore	Passing of wife, Rosemary
Deanna Wolf	Recovery from hip surgery, Spring Creek #222
Billy Mitchell & Family	Passing of wife, Maryann Mitchell
Lanette Thurman	Passing of husband, Bill
Bev Reuter	Strength and Recovery
Eva Hopkins	Strength and Recovery
Juli McClain and Family	Passing of her father, Dan
Sue Cochran	Neuropathy
Warren Thomas	Home
Paul Shaw	Declining health due to Parkinson’s Disease
Mary Lynn Christensen	Alzheimer's, at Brookdale
Sal Matarazzo	Congestive heart failure
Barbara Simons	Strength and Recovery
Jo Martin	Heart problems

Family and Friends of the Congregation

Janie Green (Andrew's Wife)	Blindness due to swollen optic nerve
Greg Randall (Morgan's Father)	Grief
Glen Davis (Andrea Howe's Father)	Health issues
Mason	Injured student from Marshall County
Brandon and Stacey Cayton	New foster parents of infant
Jim Stanley	
Parkland Florida & Marshall County Victims and Families	
Jeff Shipley (Pastor Renee's Friend)	Cancer
Sonia Fall (Pastor Renee's Family)	New terminal diagnosis
Justine Ostlund	Stroke
Jana Maxlow (Dave Howe's Friend)	Breast Cancer
Julie Stone (Andrea French's Aunt)	Breast Cancer
Laura Stewart (Bill Stewart's Mother)	Recovery
Sam Dean	(Joe Paul Dean's Brother, Autism)
Liam Corusey	Former Choir Intern
Sherry (Sue Cochron's Sister)	Health issues
Niko	Testicular cancer (spread to lungs, brain)
Terri Prince	Lung cancer and chemo
Family of Mildred Valentine	
Family of Betty Shepperson	
Family of Sally Wright (Todd's Mother)	
Tabitha & Junior	Pittman's family
Sandy Cunningham	Pastor Renee's mother, severe macular degeneration