

First Presbyterian Church
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Portsmouth, VA 23704-3605

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FIRST PRES

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KERRY-GRAM

Jesus says, "It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life." (John 6:55)

Jesus, in whose image all creation was made, is a flesh, bone, and blood human who is also perfectly divine. While the conundrum of how Jesus is fully divine *and* fully human shall occupy countless imaginations until the end of the age, what I puzzle about is this: if Jesus was flesh, bone, and blood (and he **is**), then what does it mean when he says that "flesh is useless?" Is he saying his own flesh is useless and it's only his divinity that is useful?

No. Otherwise, why have evangelists, apostles, disciples, and believers of every time reckoned the *incarnation* as the significant act of God-with-Us? It is important, vitally important, that Jesus not only saves us from condemnation through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, but that he saves us in our humanity by his humanity. However one looks at it, this is a miracle.

So, Jesus could not have meant that flesh is useless, but that flesh without the life-giving power of the Spirit is. Of what use is a human if not to be alive with the Spirit, witnessing to the good news of Christ? Can any good be done in Christ's name for the sake of God's kingdom *without* the Spirit? I don't believe so.

How would we live fully as the image of God (Genesis 1:27) without the breath of the Spirit within us (Genesis 2:7)? We cannot; we are simply not able. All that we are is who God made us to be – when we are fully alive in the Spirit we are fully alive to the creative power of the Father and the grace of the Son. Whenever you marvel at the great goodness of life, creation, and grace you pray your praise and thanksgiving to God. Try doing praise and thanksgiving *without* your body!

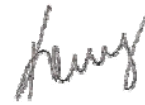
Now, try this embodied prayer:

Lift your hands to your waist, holding them together with your palms up. Think of your family and friends and what prayers they need to ask from God. Hold these prayers in your hands for a moment.

Keeping your hands together, lift them up toward heaven, offering the prayers to God. Hold your offering there for a moment.

With your arms and hands still uplifted, separate your hands and hold them palms forward, surrendering your prayers to God. Hold there for a moment.

Bring your hands back to your waist and think of other prayers to offer to God.



PRAY TO GOD WITH YOUR LIPS AND

WITH YOUR MIND,

WITH YOUR HANDS AND

WITH YOUR HEART;

PRAY TO GOD WITH ALL YOUR BEING

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Congratulations to **ROBBY & KATIE POND** on the birth of **CONNOR ROBERT POND**, on June 21, 2011. **PAT SPARKS** is the happy and proud grandmother. Congrats to Pat, too.

Congratulations to **JAY JAMES** on his graduation from **Western Branch High School**. He plans to attend Old Dominion University in the fall. Good Luck, Jay! We're all pulling for you.

Congratulations to **SHANNON BROWN** on her graduation from **Western Branch High School**. Shannon plans to take a semester off before continuing school. She is considering a career in counseling or perhaps in medicine. We wish Shannon all success in her future endeavors.

Heartfelt sympathy and love go to the family of **DON TAYLOR**. Don was a loving and devoted husband and father, and a very proud grandfather. He also was a good friend to everyone who knew him. Family was very important to Don, and you didn't necessarily have to be a blood relative to be in his family. Don's straightforward, matter-of-fact faith and his love of life inspired many. We remember his loyalty to this church and his presence at church functions. We will miss his easy-going manner, his good-natured personality, and his loving heart.

OASIS

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink....I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me. Matthew 25: 35, 40

Serving breakfast to the needy and hungry people of Portsmouth at Oasis has been an important and successful ministry of First Presbyterian Church for many years. The need continues, and the opportunity for service is ever before us. We hope to continue this ministry, using the schedule for the remainder of 2011 shown below.

The Oasis Social Ministry is located at **800 Williamsburg Avenue**. Parking is in the Social Services lot closest to

the Oasis building. If there are any questions or problems, please feel free to contact Anne Porter at (H) 399-1658 or (C) 418-0764.

Thank you to all who have served in the past, as well as those who will serve in the future. Your willingness to help is much appreciated. May God bless you and this ministry.



OASIS BREAKFAST SCHEDULE FOR 2011

August 15	Young Adult Class and Youth
September 19	Diaconate
October 17	Friendship Class
November 21	Session
December 19	Service Ministry

MEALS ON WHEELS

First Presbyterian, Portsmouth helps provide this important mission to our community. It requires a few hours each month. Meals are delivered by volunteers from our church family on the third Thursday. The food and the visits mean a lot to the recipients of the meals, as some of them don't get any other outside contact. The ones who deliver the meals can attest that it means a lot to them, as well. The Meals on Wheels program is always in need of volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, please contact the church office.

FALL FESTIVAL OF LEARNING

This fall, we will have a Festival of Learning. Exact dates and times will be advertised as the event gets closer, but now is your opportunity to provide input as to subjects and speakers. Suggestions from the congregation are welcome.

ATTENDANCE & OFFERINGS

Date	Early	SS	1100	Offerings
6/5	15	37	52	2663.00
6/12	n/a	30	69	3213.00
6/19	n/a	35	69	3229.65
6/26	n/a	27	57	1047.33
Total attendance – worship:				193
Total attendance – Sunday School:				129
Total offerings:				\$10,152.98
Monthly offering need:				\$18,000

ATTENDANCE AT EARLY SERVICE

Attendance at the early service, "A Moment Apart," has fallen in recent weeks. The Session has voted to suspend the early service for the summer. It will start again on Rally Day, September 11.

To help the pastor and Worship Ministry discern what, if any, changes to make to the early service, **please complete the WORSHIP SURVEY on the last page of this newsletter.**

Thanks!

GIVE/GET A RIDE

This program exists for members who need a ride or who are available to give a ride.

IF YOU NEED A RIDE, whether it's to the church, or to a medical appointment, please call the church office, or call Agnes McFadden at 399-3190.

They will need 2 days' advance notice to make arrangements.

IF YOU CAN GIVE A RIDE TO SOMEONE WHO NEEDS ONE, please call to let the ministry organizers know of your willingness and availability.

ALSO, PLEASE PRAY FOR THIS MINISTRY and all those who participate in it.

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES RETURNS

The popular series of summer evening concerts returned on Wednesday, June 29. There is a small charge of \$5 for dinner and dinner reservations are requested to ensure there is enough food. Supper in the Fellowship Hall starts at 6:00 pm.

Concerts begin at 7:00 p.m. in our courtyard, and are free and open to the public. On the schedule for the remainder of this summer are:

August 10 Top Hat

August 24 Sporting Molly



Summer Concerts

STAMPS FOR MISSIONS

A letter from Peggy Reinhold reports that stamps have been coming in to the program from different sources. There was the lady in Lynchburg who was quitting her personal stamp collecting and wanted to donate all her stamps, which turned out to be "boxes and boxes and bags and bags of stamps." PEVA sent "two big boxes of stamps" from the middle school youth conference at Massanetta Springs. There were stamps coming in from churches around Richmond as well as from Texas, Oregon, West Virginia, and Florida. Mrs. Reinhold sees this as a sign that God wants the Stamps for Missions program to continue. She also predicts that it will take weeks to process this abundance of stamps.

Mrs. Reinhold reminds us that though the abundance of stamps is great, so is the need in Congo. Salaries are either not paid or are so meager that they can't support families. Gardens are planted near streams so they can get the water they need, but "animals and others" help themselves to the produce. Although women sew garments to sell for additional income, no one can afford to buy the garments. Hunger is a constant fact of life for the people there. Yet, despite these conditions, the churches are filled with worshipers singing and studying Bibles that Stamps for Missions helps provide.

She asks that we thank God for blessing the program and pray for the people of Congo.

REMINDER FROM THE SHEPHERD COMMITTEE

Paul Butler would like to remind you that if are serving as a Shepherd and plan to be out of town – or otherwise unavailable for more than a couple of days, you should please contact him by phone at 393-1398, or by e-mail at butler.alicepaul@verizon.net. This way, your Lambs can be contacted, should the Shepherd list be activated.

DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER

Articles or information to be published in the newsletter must be submitted to the Editor by the 25th of the previous month. Submissions should be sent to Lane Pittman:

Postal Mail: 614 Chandler Harper Drive
Portsmouth, VA 23701
Email: slp4149@aol.com
Phone: 757-405-3554

RECYCLING

First Presbyterian, Portsmouth, is recycling. Members of our congregation are reminded that this effort depends on their attention and cooperation. There is a BLUE recycling bin in the Fellowship Hall for paper, aluminum and plastic. PLEASE – no food or anything else! Also, there are bins in the church office, the pastor's study, and the choir room for recycling paper.



It is a small thing to ask, and shows our appreciation for the beautiful world God gave us.

LEARNING THE PRACTICE OF WORSHIP

Children 7 years old and above are encouraged to remain in worship for the entire service. The development of young people as Christians includes active experience and participation in the worship service. They learn the practice of worship and become familiar and comfortable with the worship experience. Thus, they and the church benefit from their presence.

Children 6 and younger will continue to be welcome in the nursery.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Adrienne Knight and Trudy Webb will be co-coordinators of **Vacation Bible School** this summer. We will not be holding VBS jointly with St. John's Episcopal at their facility, as we have done for the last few years. We have decided to try something different this year, so watch the newsletter and bulletins for more information as plans develop.

CHURCH SCHEDULE for AUGUST, 2011

Sunday, July 31	10am	Sunday School
	11am	Worship
Sunday, Aug 7	10am	Sunday School
	11am	Worship [Communion]
Wednesday, Aug 10	7pm	Summer Concert
Sunday, Aug 14	10am	Sunday School
	11am	Worship
Tuesday, Aug 16—	Tuesday, Aug 23, Pastor out of town	
	7pm	Diaconate Mtg.
Sunday, Aug 21	10am	Sunday School
	11am	Worship
Wednesday, Aug 24	7pm	Summer Concert
Sunday, Aug 28	10am	Sunday School
	11am	Worship

OASIS REQUEST FOR SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Oasis Social Ministry would appreciate donations of any of the following back-to-school supplies:

- Pencils
- Erasers
- Rulers
- Colored Pencils
- Crayons
- Glue
- Scissors
- Spiral Notebooks
- Wide-ruled Paper
- Composition Books
- Dictionaries
- Kleenex Tissues [Individual Packets]
- Hand Cleanser



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR BACK TO SCHOOL PROGRAM. WITH YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS OVER 600 CHILDREN RECEIVED SCHOOL SUPPLIES LAST YEAR.

MUSING: QUALIFIED

WOULD YOU HIRE a contractor to build your house who can't read a blueprint? Would you choose to send your child to a teacher who doesn't know the subject being taught? Would you consult a doctor who hasn't studied medicine or submit to a surgeon who doesn't know anatomy? What about a Christian who hasn't read the Bible? Would you rely on that person's interpretation of scripture? Sadly, a lot of Christians rely on what they have been told about the Bible and what it says rather than reading and studying God's word for themselves.

READING THE BIBLE is not a requirement for salvation, of course; we have been saved already, because of our belief in God's Son. However, there is more to being a Christian than being saved. Reading and studying scripture is a vitally important part of leading a Christian life. Knowing selected portions of the Bible and being able to quote chosen verses comes in handy at certain times; but in order to gain some understanding of God and his plan for our salvation one needs to read the whole Bible – and not just the New Testament, either. Much of what can be found in the New Testament either quotes or refers to Old Testament passages.

TO BE SURE, reading the Bible from cover to cover can be a daunting undertaking, and even those who have done so – some more than once – still have questions. There are certain passages that are just plain puzzling or confusing. Besides this, some passages and chapters seem to be boring lists and numbers. Then there are instructions and rules that appear to have no application to life in the modern world.

THE BIBLE IS several types of books all in one. It is the history of a people and a nation who had a special relationship with God. It is the story of the covenants that God made with them and their performance in living up to their parts in those covenants. It is book of philosophy, a significant source of thought about important matters. It is a work of literature, containing a collection of stories and poems that are fascinating and uplifting. It is a guide for living in this world and preparing for the next.

SOME PARTS ARE tough going, but stick with it. A passage that seems confusing at first may become clearer with rereading and prayerful study. A lot of things gain meaning in the context of the book or the Bible as a whole.

Also, there are stories and gems of wisdom and enlightenment buried among many of those lists and numbers that seem so dry. If the Bible is the word of God – and Christians believe that it is – then who are we to skip over some passages or declare them meaningless or too hard? God reveals himself to us through scripture, and it would contradict that revelation if the Bible included parts that could be left out or were impossible to understand.

DOES SOME PASSAGE or portion of scripture interest you or hold special meaning for you? You might want to commit that passage to memory. We also might study a particular portion by getting our hands on a Bible commentary. This kind of research can be fascinating and fulfilling. There are lots of helps and sources of Bible study out there. One doesn't need to be a Biblical scholar; just follow where the Spirit leads. If you don't want to tackle this by yourself, you may want to start a Bible study group. Studying together and trading ideas can help our own understanding. Also, age doesn't matter. Whether we've been around for a lot of years or just a few – whether parent or child – God's word is there for us and for our benefit.

IT MAY HELP us as we read it to keep in mind that the story in the Bible is not finished. Instead it is an on-going story, and through our lives as Christians the story continues. What we do and how we live becomes part of story. As we read and study the Bible, we incorporate God's will and teachings into our lives. Thus, we grow closer to what God intends us to be and live as we are taught to live. We gain in comprehension of Christian thought as it is based on Scripture. We gain better understanding and appreciation of God's perfect love and grace, justice and mercy from the creation of the world.

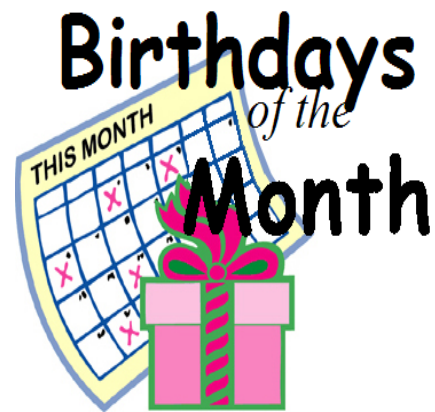
DON'T FORGET PRAYER. There are many prayers in the Bible. Not just reading, but actually praying one of these is a good way to start Bible study. Praying one of the Psalms, for instance, can be soothing to the soul and can put us in the right frame of mind.

WHEN STUDYING GOD'S word, we have the privilege of talking to the Author. When a passage troubles or puzzles us, we can pray for God's help with it. When a passage is clear and meaningful, we should thank God and praise him for revealing himself to us in this way.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN, reading and studying God's word is an important – even necessary – qualification.

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

7	Makayla Winkler
10	Mike Taylor
11	Margaret Smith Erin McRary
12	Nancy Mayo
14	Duff Porter, III Yvonne Goolsby
15	Stephin Goolsby
16	Jason Turner Robert Norfleet, Jr. [Robby]
17	Carrie Griffin
19	Grady Fitzwater
20	Gus Spanos
21	Sylvia Stephenson
22	Emily Fay
23	Richard Griffin
27	Elizabeth Fitzwater
28	Linda Hackworth
29	Gwen Brown Alice Simpson



WORSHIP SURVEY

ATTENTION PLEASE! First Presbyterian Church is committed to providing an opportunity for meaningful worship at 9:00 AM on Sunday, and invites you to complete this survey. Please return by email or by hand to the church office, Pastor Kerry or Elder Diane Griffin. Your input into our planning is invaluable. Thank you!

Please rank in order of importance : 1= important
2= neither important or unimportant
3= not important

(You may use a ranking more than one time).

- _____ It is important to me to come to church at 9:00 rather than 11:00.
- _____ It is important to me to sing "new" music other than what's in the hymnal.
- _____ It is important to me to try worship experiences that are different from the classic 11:00 worship.
- _____ It is important to me for me to experience classic worship, just earlier in the morning and for a shorter time.
- _____ It is important to me to use other media (watch movie clips or talk about books) with messages that affect or cause me to reflect on my faith.
- _____ It is important for me to experience a prayer service when we pray for particular circumstances in the world like peace or an end to hunger.
- _____ It is important to me to explore my spirituality by learning different forms of prayer and ways to read scripture.

With respect to the early service, it is important to me to _____

If the following services were offered once a month, please indicate whether you would be

1 = interested 2= neither interested or uninterested 3= not interested

(You may use a ranking more than one time).

- _____ A service devoted to faith and culture, discussing a book or movie.
- _____ A service devoted to praying for world conditions.
- _____ A service devoted to developing my Spirituality.
- _____ A service devoted to classic worship, like the 11:00 service.
- _____ A service devoted to newer or contemporary Christian music.

Other ideas or suggestions for the worship ministry team regarding this or other matters

