

The First Edition

First Presbyterian Church, Ellerbe, NC

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From the Pastor

Worship wars. We often hear of them. The fact is they are nothing new; they are as old as Cain and Abel and as contemporary as praise bands vs. choirs vs. exclusive psalmody (with neither choir nor instruments nor “uninspired” song). And perhaps there will be disagreement concerning worship until Jesus returns. Nevertheless, there would be much more consensus if only we could agree on one thing – God regulates worship in his word; thus, we should allow his word to regulate our worship. This idea is commonly referred as the “regulative principle of worship.” Simply stated the principle is this: in worship we do *only* those things God commands and we do them *God’s* way.

While there were varying views about worship among the Protestant reformers, John Calvin and John Knox were certainly proponents of this Regulative Principle, as later on were the Puritans. Historically, Presbyterians have affirmed this principle, albeit with varying applications. The Regulative Principle was huge for the Westminster divines who were in fact Puritans and gave us our Westminster standards. Though broached in numerous places, the Regulative Principle is explicitly stated in Westminster Confession of Faith chapter 21: “... But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture” (21:1).

Well and good, one might say, but where is this principle taught in the Bible? The short answer is “more places than one might think.” The foundation is laid in the second commandment: “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth” (Exod. 20:4 ESV). The first commandment teaches us whom to worship; the second teaches us how. The idea is simply that God does not leave us to our imagination as to how to worship him; rather, we are to worship him as he tells us in his word. The Golden Calf episode is a case in point. The problem in Exodus 32 is not primarily that the Israelites are intentionally worshipping another god altogether. No, in their minds they are worshipping the God who brought them out of Egypt. The problem is that they are worshipping him as they imagine him to be. Or take Nadab and Abihu and their “strange fire” in Leviticus 10:1-3. Why was it that the Lord sent out *his* fire to consume them? The only explanation provided is simply that they “offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them” (10:1). Or Uzzah in 2 Samuel 6. All he did was touch the ark. Yes, but God had given explicit instructions concerning how to carry the ark, and Uzzah disregarded those instructions.

As we come to the New Testament, worship is simplified quite a bit; yet, simpler does not equate to unbridled freedom. In Colossians 2:16-23 the apostle Paul teaches against worshipping according to human prejudice rather than God’s precepts. In the pastoral epistles, the apostle Paul spells out some of the elements which should be part of New Testament worship (1 Tim. 2:1-2, 8; 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:2). In 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 Paul teaches extensively on what should and should not be happening in corporate worship.

There are two primary reasons why we should want to abide by this “regulative principle,” why we should consider it a helpful rather than a harmful. First, we should want to give God what *he wants* in worship, rather than what our imperfect hearts might more naturally be inclined to offer. I love pancakes, always have. And it was Mom’s birthday. Well, thought I, I will give her a new griddle, so she can mass produce pancakes without some of the frying pan hassle. Well, mom never complained, but she had never really asked for a griddle. I was giving her what I wanted to give her whether she wanted a griddle or not. The principle is the same in worship; if we really want to please God, we will give him what he desires rather than what we desire.

The other reason is this: When we bring into worship elements and ordinances that God has not ordained, we bind the conscience of our brothers and sisters where we have no right to bind them. Liberty of conscience was a huge issue for the Westminster divines. Chapter 20 of the Westminster Confession of Faith states: “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to His Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship...” (20:2) If we love our brothers and sisters we will not insist on requiring them to do things in worship which God does not require. Come to think of it, the Regulative Principle is simply the outworking of those two great commandments Jesus gave us – We love God first and we love our fellow man second (Matt. 22:37-40). If this applies anywhere, it applies in worship.

So that is the Regulative Principle, and perhaps we should underline *principle*. I realize it raises all kinds of questions and that good people will differ in the precise application. Yet if Christians in our day could at least agree on this principle many of our major differences would soon disappear. So, we seek to worship God “in spirit and truth” may we keep before us the “regulative principle.” Until next time. ...

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Layton



Circle II met on Tuesday night, January 29th at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall with 8 members in attendance and we welcomed guest, Karen Greene. Kim Yates hosted and presented lesson one from our new study in the Fruit of the Spirit – Joy entitled “Joy in Trials” based on James 1:2-12. “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” (v12)

Members discussed upcoming events for 2019 and reviewed our Agenda. We are collecting nonperishable and canned goods for our annual Souper Bowl food drive. We ask that all donations be placed in the vestibule or fellowship hall by Sunday, February 3rd. The annual Seniors Valentines Luncheon will be held on Sunday, February 10th hosted by Circle II and the youth. We invite you to attend and enjoy a wonderful meal and fellowship. We do ask that you RSVP to Sandra Futrell by calling (910) 652-5859 by Wednesday, February 6th, so we may have a good count for food purposes.

Our next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 26th at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Lori Clark will be hosting and we invite any lady not currently involved in Circle to join us.

Patricia McCormick, *Secretary*



The annual Seniors Valentines Luncheon hosted by Circle II and the youth is Sunday, February 10th. Please RSVP to Sandra Futrell (910) 652-5859 by Wednesday, February 6th,

Circle III met on January 8 at 1:00 pm. Marion Covington had the devotion about *Prayer and Resting*. The project for January was to assist with taking down the church Christmas decorations. The project for February is to prepare Valentine goodie bags for the shut-ins, military personnel, and college students.

Jeanine Wall led the lesson *Living in Peace with Others* from Romans 12:17-21. The opening story in the lesson was about a neighbor dumping trash on someone’s property, and the responses that could occur from the person who was offended.

There will not be a lesson in February when the Valentine bags are prepared. The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 5 at 1:00 pm in the old fellowship hall. Please join us!

Jan Stivers, *Secretary*



WIC Update

The WIC quarterly meeting was held Tuesday, January 8 at 7:00 pm. Pastor Stan provided an update from the Session and will take the Session feedback from the ladies.

Beth Meacham, co-chairman of Missions to the World (MTW), presented the program about the MTW website which includes active mission opportunities throughout the world and even in Cherokee, NC. A MTW video was also featured and she gave us a nine week MTW prayer guide.

A new WIC project is to have an updated membership directory for everyone to use. A draft copy has been placed in the vestibule and is also being sent to the online newsletter recipients. Online edits should be sent to WIC Secretary Jan Stivers at kevinandjan@etinternet.net. The deadline for all edits is Sunday, February 10.

The WIC bylaws and guidelines will also be reviewed and a committee was developed for this project. The committee will meet Wednesday, February 20 at 7:00 pm in the fellowship hall.

A Spring Fling for the ladies is scheduled for Saturday, April 6, 9:00—11:00 am with an optional craft at the end of the event. More information will be provided soon.

Special thanks to all who helped decorate and undecorated the church for Christmas. Also thanks to those who have helped with the sanctuary bathroom renovations which are nearing completion.

Sandra Futrell, *WIC President*

Membership Directory

A WIC project is to have an updated membership directory that will be available for everyone to use. A draft copy of this is in the vestibule, and it was also emailed on January 11 by Austin Bryant to those who receive their newsletter by email. Please review your information and make any edits on the vestibule copy or by email to WIC Secretary Jan Stivers at kevinandjan@etinternet.net. Edits should be made by Sunday, February 10.

From the Session

The regular monthly stated Session meeting was held Wednesday evening, January 9. No shepherding meeting was held this month.


Teaching Elder Mr. Layton requested that he attend the REF Conference to be held July 29-Aug 1, 2019. He also reported health and hospital issues involving our church since the last Session meeting. The Lumberton prayer meeting by the Planning Committee for the proposal of a PCA church in the Lumberton areas has been moved to January 31, 2019. May we be in prayer for the Church Planting Committee as they finalize their plans for this important step. The One Call Committee is in the process of selecting methods to direct news and important messages to our church members. This will take the place of our HeartLine calling.

The Session is anticipating hosting Presbytery during 2019. No date or decision for the quarterly event has been made. The annual General Assembly will be held June 25-28 in Dallas, Texas. A preliminary planning of the 2019 Vacation Bible School has been discussed while a Revival Committee has been chosen. Revival is scheduled for May 5-8. The WIC is in the process of updating the church directory. Other business of the church was discussed and acted upon.

RE Billy Carter

Church Transportation

The Session is desirous of providing transportation for anyone wanting to worship but needs transportation. If you are willing to drive others to worship or know of anyone needing transportation to worship, please let a Session member know.

Choir Notes  Wow, February is upon us with its continuation of winter weather which is typical for this time of year. Yes, the frigid temperatures and the chill in the air may deter one's plans yet the choir enjoys the warm fellowship of its faithful members with no change in plans, as we lean on our Lord for guidance.

No, it's not too early to think about Easter although it arrives mid-April. Choir Director Ted Futrell is already in the process of selecting special music for our annual Easter cantata. Anyone who feels led in joining our choir for this special event is cordially invited. Your presence will be appreciated.

In Spiritual Love, Billy Carter

Email Address Updates

Ellerbe Telephone/Riverstreet Telephone has notified customers that their email accounts with @etinternet.net in the address, will change to @rsnet.org on January 29 (current emails may still work until April 30, 2019). If the first part of your email address is changing, please send Jan Stivers (address below) an email, otherwise we will assume your username is the same. For example, kevinandjan@etinternet.net will now be kevinandjan@rsnet.org and there will not be a need for notifying us since the first part of the email address did not change. Thank you!

Special Fund

While working full-time Timm is continuing to pursue seminary studies at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte. The Session has set up a fund to help defray Timm's seminary costs. Persons wishing to contribute to this fund should so designate on their checks.

Church Officers:

Ruling Elders

- Austin Bryant
- Bill Carter
- Tim Clark
- Timm Dazey
- Rickie DeWitt
- Robert Mabe
- Richard Smith
- Jimmy Wagers
- Tony Yates

Deacons

- Chris Meacham (class of 2019)
- Tommy White (class of 2019)

WIC Officers

- Sandra Futrell, President
- Patricia McCormick, Vice-President
- Jan Stivers, Secretary
- Jane Carriker, Treasurer
- Barbara Wagers, Historian
- Effie Meacham/Beth Meacham, Mission to the World Chair
- Jane Smith/Victoria Smith, Mission to North America Chair
- Lori Clark, Christian Growth Chair

Greeters

- 3 M/M Billy Carter
- 10 Mr. Timm Dazey and Josh Dazey
- 17 M/M Chris Meacham
- 24 M/M Richard Smith



*Happy Birthday
February*

- 5 John Sears, Jr.
- 8 Ted Futrell
- 10 Bradley McInnis
- 12 Lauren Clark
- 13 Kevin Stivers
- 17 Barbara Sears
- 21 Lorie Tatum
- 27 Wayne Wright
- 27 Shelly Russell
- 28 Marty Goodman



Prayer List: Armed Forces and Families, Our President and national leaders, the Persecuted Church and Christians worldwide, Peace and Unity in our country, Jack Berry, Austin Bryant, Kevin Conner, A.T. Covington, Evon Craven, Kevin Craven, Sharon DeWitt, Mark Futrell, Becky Henderson, Doris Hill, Patrick Kelly, Tommy Kinney, Gayle Mabe, Meredith McBride, Dan McInnis, Shannon McNeill, Effie Meacham, Mary Murdock, Larry Parsons, Jewell Paul, Sophia Potterfield, Jimmy Raines, Hazel Rhyne, Cozette Rush, Carolyn Sellers, Mark Sellers, Jane Smith, Herman and Naomi Stutts, Colton Williams, Katie White, Jack Yates, Unspoken Requests.

Anniversaries



- 4 M/M Stan Layton
- 14 M/M Tom Covington
- 20 M/M Steve Goodman

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
February					1	2
3 5:00 pm Youth Group	4	5 1:00 pm Circle 3 Valentine Gift bag project	6 6:00 pm Meal provided 6:30 Bible Study 7:00 Deacon's meeting	7	8	9
10 Sr. Citizen and Valentine Luncheon 6:00 pm Prayer Service	11 	12	13 6:00 pm Meal provided 6:30 Bible Study 7:00 Session meeting	14	15	16
17 6:00 pm Prayer Service	18	19	20 6:00 pm Meal provided 6:30 Bible Study 7:00 pm WIC bylaws committee meeting	21	22	23 Central Carolina Presbytery Meeting at Carolina PCA in Locust
24 6:00 pm Prayer Service	25	26 6:30 pm Circle 2 meeting	27 6:00 pm Meal Provided 6:30 Bible Study	28	<p>Every Sunday: 9:15 –9:45 am—Prayer season, conference room. 10:00 am—Sunday School opening in sanctuary followed by classrooms. 11:00 am—Worship service</p>	