

The First Edition

First Presbyterian Church, Ellerbe, NC

April 2022

www.pcanet.org
Church Website: www.ellerbepca.com

Volume XXXII Edition 4

From the Pastor

Not often but occasionally I think about retirement - when it might happen and what it might look like (Lord willing, not any time soon). And every time I think about retirement, I am reminded of Billy Graham's answer when asked why he continued preaching and crusading, even into his eighties and beyond. His answer was – and if this is not precisely what he said, it is very close – “I never have found the word ‘retirement’ in the Bible.” I have often reflected on that answer. The obvious question is – “Was Dr. Graham right or was he wrong?”

Well, let's start with sheer linguistics. A strict and mere Biblicist answer is that Dr. Graham was correct. To the best of my knowledge, one will not find the word “retirement” in the Bible. And to my limited knowledge (key word “limited”), there is no Hebrew or Greek counterpart for our English word retirement. But God does not call us to be mere Biblicists who say that if we cannot find one catch-all proof text then a doctrine cannot be biblical. The word Trinity is not found in the Bible; yet as we look at numerous biblical concepts and verses, we cannot escape the fact that the God of the Bible is triune in essence.

Well and good; the Trinity is biblical. But what about retirement? Well, there are a couple of passages which lend some support to the concept of retirement. In Numbers 4:1-49 we are told that the Levites, including the clans of Kohath, Gershon, and Merari, were called into service at age 30 and were formally released from their official duty at age fifty. Later Numbers 8:25-6 summarizes, “And from the age of fifty years they shall withdraw from the duty of the service and serve no more. They minister to their brothers in the tent of meeting by keeping guard, but they shall do no service (ESV).” Who knows all the reasons why the Lord determined to restrict the tabernacle service of the Levites to men between thirty and fifty, but the Numbers 4 passage clearly implies that the “heavy lifting” associated with their tabernacle service was a factor. That being the case, we see that the Bible does recognize some limited concept of retirement. Further, my guess is that this statute in the law had at least something to do with the reality that in a fallen world the older we get the less we are able to do all that we once could. That is one thing we should love about the Bible – it is so realistic.

And if the Bible does recognize some concept of retirement, then there is a reminder that there may come a day when we are no longer able to perform quite the way we once could. Various professions recognize that and have retirement rules to effect it. Yet to say that we may find a retirement concept in the Bible is far from saying we may reach a certain age and adopt a “retirement mentality.” Joel Beeke (or perhaps it was Mark Jones; the book was co-authored) tells of sitting next to a newly retired evangelical minister on a plane. In the course of conversation, the minister stated: “The way I figure is that I gave my entire life to the Lord and His church, so now I'm going to live the rest of it for me” ([*A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* by Joel R. Beeke & Mark Jones, 846](#)). I think that is precisely the sinful retirement mentality Dr. Graham had in mind when he responded to the question about his prolonged ministry.

But if the Bible does recognize some conception of retirement and yet cautions against adopting a “retirement mentality,” then what should be our attitude about retirement and how should that affect our work in the world and our service to the Lord? First (and quickly), God has created us to work and we should do our best to be as productive as we can be as long as possible (Gen. 2:15; Exod. 20:9). That does not necessarily mean that we should be paid for our services, if we are not in financial need. It simply means we should strive to be productive, to be doing things to help others in the world. The same principle holds true in the church. We should be doing what we can as long as we can, while at the same time passing on our knowledge and experience to others who will serve after we are no longer able.

Age affects some differently than others as the example of Caleb shows us. He stated that even at 85 he was as strong at the day Moses called him into service and therefore was more than capable of taking on the fearful Anakim with their fortified cities (Josh. 14:10-2). Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh (Exod. 7:7). In Israel elders were elders in part because they were older and thus considered wiser. Even when elders are not able to serve as fully as they once could they should provide counsel where needed and we should gladly receive it (Lev. 19:32). Furthermore, Paul counsels the

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older women that they should teach sound doctrine to the younger women. Flowing out of that sound doctrine and godly examples these older widows were to train up the younger women to fulfill their God-given roles as wives and mothers (Titus 2:3-5). And what if an elderly lady is too old to teach? She can at least pray. Paul counsels Timothy with regard to the blessing older widows can be to the church – “She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives” (1 Tim. 5:5-6 ESV). The self-indulgent widow is no different than the retired evangelical minister on Beeke’s plane. God calls us to do all we can for him as long as we can, as best we can. We may retire in a formal sense, but we should never retire in a spiritual and practical sense. As long as the Lord gives us breath, we are to seek to serve him. That is a *biblical retirement mentality*. In fact, that is retirement theology.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Stan

From the Session

The regular monthly stated Session meeting was held Wednesday evening, March 23 with the Session approving the agenda as presented and the monthly Treasurer’s Report as well. Teaching Elder Mr. Layton gave his regular monthly pastor’s report including an update on sickness among our church family and community, their needs, and visits.

Ruling Elder (RE) Tony Yates, one of our commissioners to Presbytery this quarter, reported on the Central Carolina Presbytery meeting held February 26 at Carolina PCA. Noteworthy, an article “Reality Check of the PCA” was discussed and shared by the Session.

All correspondence including thank you notes, memorials, and other communications, were received and acknowledged. A thank-you note was sent to our Treasurer, Richard Smith, as well.

Maundy Thursday will be held Thursday, April 14 at 7:00 pm with a covered dish dinner served beforehand. The Easter Sunrise service will be held at 7:00 am on Sunday, April 17 with breakfast to follow. Our Lord’s Supper will be observed during the worship service on Sunday morning, April 3.

The Session has approved for Circle II to have Movie Nights again after a period of cancellations due to the virus. Selective titles will be approved with time and dates chosen by the Circle. This has proven in the past to be a ministry of spiritual learning and growth, and an inspiring Christian fellowship among believers.

“By His power to rule all things, He will change our simple bodies and make them like His own glorious body.” (Philippians 3:21).

Ruling Elder Billy Carter



WIC Update

The landscaping project has begun and much progress has already been made! Beth Bryant has spearheaded the project and her update is as follows: The Landscaping Committee appreciates your support shown in ordering the engraved bricks for the Memorial Garden. The brick pavers have been lasered and will be arranged in the designed area. We are excited that we are focusing on our rich history of First Presbyterian ministers (55) and memorializing our family and friends. When completed, we will include a small bench for respite while visiting the garden. Please have all forms completed by April 10th (a copy is included in this newsletter).

Thank you to everyone who helped with the storage area clean-out on March 19. Several trucks were loaded including one large truck provided by the town of Ellerbe. The main storage building beside the fellowship hall is now clean and tidy with plenty of room for storage.

The Maundy Thursday dinner will be held Thursday, April 14 hosted by Circle II at 6:00 pm. This will be our first covered dish meal since Covid-19 began two years ago! Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend where a brief service will also be held in the fellowship hall.

Patricia McCormick WIC President

Circle News

Circle II met on Tuesday night, March 29th at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall. We hosted our Annual Salad Supper and had 14 ladies to attend. Lori Clark opened with prayer and presented a short devotion from Our Daily Bread entitled “Giving Thanks Always” based on Isaiah 12:1-6. We are quick to give thanks to the Lord in good times, but how quick are we to give thanks in the bad?

We enjoyed a variety of delicious salads and desserts along with the wonderful fellowship. A special thank you to all who provided our meal.

Circle II will be hosting the annual Easter Egg & Scavenger Hunt on Saturday, April 16th from 11 am until 1 pm. Lunch will be served. Please plan to come and spread the word. Our next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 26th at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall with Beth Meacham hosting. We invite any lady not involved in Circle to join us!

Patricia McCormick, Secretary

First Presbyterian Church
Memorial Garden -Engraved Brick Order Form
Deadline Sunday, April 10



Name on Brick (*One name per brick*)

Dates optional (example below)

Jane Doe

1927 - 2008

PRINT:

Your Name _____

Phone _____

\$50.00 - Landscaping Project

Drop in collection plate.

Announcements

- **LORD'S SUPPER APRIL 3:** We will be observing the Lord's Supper next Sunday. In order to receive the optimal blessing from the Lord's Supper and to avoid condemnation, it is wise to prepare accordingly. One helpful way to prepare is to meditate upon Westminster Larger Catechism question #171. The question is: How are they who receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to prepare themselves before they come to it? The answer is: They who receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves for it, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance, love to God and the brothers, charity to all men, forgiving those who have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.
- **LORD'S DAY EVENING FELLOWSHIP:** There is no better way to close out the Lord's Day than together in fellowship with the Lord and his people. Everyone is invited to the manse at 6:00 p.m. for our Lord's Day Evening Fellowship, which includes include a discussion-oriented study of the Westminster Confession of Faith, a season of prayer, and singing (a Psalm and a hymn). Everyone is invited.
- **CONTACTING PASTOR LAYTON:** In order to speak with Pastor Layton or leave a message for him, you may reach him in the following ways. You may either try the church, the number for which is (910) 652-5231; or his cell phone (text or call), the number for which is (910) 206-9035. If you try the church phone and he does not return your call within one day, it is best to follow up by calling his cell phone (and, if necessary, leaving a message).
- **WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY:** The time for the Wednesday evening Bible study has been changed from 6:15 to 6:30 p.m. Please note this change.
- **SUNDAY SCHOOL:** Sunday School has resumed Sunday with a single class in the new fellowship hall at 10 am. Ruling Elder Timm Dazey will be teaching this class and everyone is invited. This class is also being aired on radio frequency FM 87.9.
- **LANDSCAPING PROJECT:** Contributions to the landscaping project should be designated for that purpose. Questions concerning this project may be directed to the Landscape Committee: Patricia McCormick, Sandra Futrell, Jan Stivers, Jane Carriker, Susan DeWitt, Donna White, Jeanine Wall, Beth Bryant, Rickie DeWitt.
- **MINISTERIAL INTERN:** While working full-time, Timm Dazey continues to pursue seminary studies at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte. Timm is also now officially a candidate for the gospel ministry with Central Carolina Presbytery and is fulfilling the requirements of his internship through his ministry among us. 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, Elder Emeritus
- Richard Smith
- Jimmy Wagers
- Tony Yates

Deacons:

- Chris Meacham
- Buck Smith
- Kevin Stivers
- Tommy White

WIC Officers

- Patricia McCormick, President
- Beth Meacham, Vice-President
- Jan Stivers, Secretary
- Jane Carriker, Treasurer
- Barbara Wagers, Historian
- Natasha Grotenhuis, Mission to the World Chair
- Ginny Layton, Mission to North America Chair
- Lori Clark, Christian Growth Chair

Anniversaries

24 M/M Todd Horne

28 M/M Darrell Uribe






Happy
Birthday!
April

PRAYER LIST:



President and other national leaders, the Ukraine/Russia War, the Persecuted Church and Christians worldwide, Donna Buckeridge, Austin Bryant, Jason Carter, Mary Ellen Carter, Morris Carter, Carol Chappell, Kevin Conner, A. T. Covington, Tom Covington, Alli Cundy, Casey Dawkins, Sharon DeWitt, Ellerbe First Responders, Mark Futrell, Tommy Kennedy, Patricia Harris, Bella Haynes, Becky Henderson, Melanie Johnson, Louise Lucas, Ronnie Lucas, Jeremy Manning, Meredith McBride, Max McCormick, Doris McIntire, Stanley McDonald, Lee McKenzie, Shannon McNeil, Effie Meacham, Jimmy Meacham, Andy Meacham, Zachery Meacham, Peyton Monroe, Janet Monroe, Ricky Monroe, Jewel Paul, Sophia Potterfield, Ally Russell, Carolyn Sellers, Mark Sellers, Gail Skipper, Betty Smith, Jane Smith, Herman and Naomi Stutts, Jean Stutts, Jimmy Wallace, James Watson, Hayley White, Curtis Wright, Vera Wright, unspoken Requests

2 Paul Johnson
3 Heather Greene
3 Lisa Crowley
4 Brooke Monroe
6 Julia McIntosh
7 Karen Hairfield
8 Kellee Greene
10 Jane Carriker
11 Kimberly Latta
13 Todd Horne
16 Kimberly Simmons
18 Tommy White
20 Richard Uribe
23 Anna Yarbrough
23 D Kennett
28 Wessley Futrell
29 Regina Uribe

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
April 2022	Sunday School is at 10:00 in the Fellowship Hall and Worship service is at 11:00 am Sunday mornings in the sanctuary.				1	2
3 The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be observed during the worship service. 6:00 pm Lord's Day fellowship at the manse	4	5	6 6:30 pm Bible study, fellowship hall 7:00 pm Deacon's meeting	7	8	9
10 6:00 pm Lord's Day fellowship at the manse	11	12	13 7:00 pm Session meeting	14 6:00 pm Maundy Thursday covered dish meal and service at 7:00 pm, fellowship hall	15 	16 11:00 am—1:00 pm Easter Egg & Scavenger hunt with lunch hosted by Circle 2 
17 7:00 am Easter Sunrise Service & breakfast.		9	20	21	22	23
24 6:00 pm Lord's Day fellowship at the manse	25	26 6:30 pm Circle 2 meeting, fellowship hall	27 6:30 pm Bible study, fellowship hall	28	29	30