

The First Edition

First Presbyterian Church, Ellerbe, NC

August 2020

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

Volume XXX Edition 8

From the Pastor:

A story was told of a man who operated an ice house and had lost his very good watch in the sawdust there. After the owner had offered a reward to the finder and others had searched unsuccessfully, a small boy went into the ice house and came out only a few minutes later – with the watch! Asked how he found it, the boy simply replied, “I just lay down in the sawdust and listened. Finally, I heard the watch ticking” (*The Word Became Flesh* by Ralph Dale Davis, 23). Listening helps.

Listening helps when listening to sermons. In Luke 8:18 Jesus says, “Take care how you hear.” The great evangelist George Whitfield once preached a sermon on this text entitled – “Take Care How You Hear.” I wish I had the manuscript for that sermon; however, I did find this online a while back – “How to Listen to Your Pastor’s Sermon?” On the whole it is pretty sound. Some of these points require more elaboration than others, but let’s take them as they come. The points are the author’s; the elaboration is mine.

If you live within a few blocks of the church and would like to hear the sermon live, try tuning into radio station 87.9 FM at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday morning.

Pray for your pastor.

After exhorting the Ephesian Christians to put on the whole armor of God and to do so with prayer, the apostle Paul encourages prayer for himself – “that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel” (Eph. 6:19 ESV). *Please* pray the Lord would give us clarity and conviction.

Pray for a receptive heart.

But don’t stop with praying for the preacher to preach; pray that you may hear. Yet before praying that we would hear, we may need to deal with sin in our lives. James, the half-brother of our Lord, exhorts his readers to “put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jas. 1:21). It is amazing how a prepared heart will do wonders for hearing.

Pray for an alert mind.

Just as we need to be spiritually ready for worship, we also need to be physically prepared. Though providential circumstances at times complicate things, the aim should always be to get a good night of sleep on Saturday night. It also helps to think a bit ahead of time about the passage which will be expounded. One benefit to receiving the bulletin ahead of time is that we can prepare (whether as families or individuals) the night before by reading the passage beforehand and thinking a bit about it.

Keep your Bible open.

Here is a difference between a good sermon and a bad one. As a rule, if you can make it all the way through the sermon without ever feeling the need to open your Bible, the pastor most likely has not done his job. The pastor’s job is to explain, illustrate, and apply the word of God; the hearer’s job to see it for himself.

Stay focused by taking notes.

Let me add a bit of correction and caveat to this one (remember I “borrowed” these tips). We need to be careful because preaching never should be a merely academic exercise. God is aiming at transforming hearts not simply filling minds, worse yet only spilling ink. The great Welsh preacher D. Martyn Lloyd-²

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Jones used to say that he did not mind people taking notes at the beginning of his sermon, but he felt that he had failed if they were still writing when he concluded. I know one preacher who would “order” his parishioners to put down pen and paper before he started. I think that is a bit much. I would say this – If taking a few notes helps you to stay focused as you learn to listen to sermons, then take a few notes; yet at the same time, develop the practice of listening, so that the sermon goes through the mind to the heart. My concern is not whether you can regurgitate my three points, but rather that God’s word is making an impression on your heart and life.

Turn your phone off.

Kevin Martin is the CEO of the World News Group which produces *World* magazine and airs “The World and Everything in It.” A few months ago, he wrote an article drawing attention to how addicted he was to checking the news. I was a bit surprised and saddened when he admitted checking his phone for news *all throughout the worship service*. At least he was honest. Perhaps Jesus’ counsel in Matthew 18:8-9 about “stumbling blocks” comes into play here. If you have trouble with checking your phone during the service, then by all means leave it at home.

Ignore the time.

Nothing is more discouraging to a pastor than having a member begin to study his watch around 11:45 A.M. Amazingly, I have observed this phenomenon with some of the best preachers in the word preaching.

Genuinely respond.

Whether explicit or implicit, every sermon should call for a response of some type. If there is an evangelistic call, pray for the Lord to work in people’s hearts. If the focus is witnessing, ask the Lord to help you be a better witness. If the sermon directs you to the glorious character of God, worship him and prepare to sing his praise. If the Lord is bringing conviction over a particular sin, then repent of that particular sin particularly.

Recall sermon at home.

The Berean Christians are our example here. They did not listen to sermons and then quickly go about their merry way. Unlike the Jews of Thessalonica who drove Paul out of town for his preaching, Luke tells us the Jews of Berea “received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so” (Acts 17:11b). As for believers, we should come back to the sermons we hear. We should discuss them over lunch – what was said and how it applies to us. The great puritan pastor Richard Baxter wrote, “Better meditate on one sermon than hear five. Many complain that they do not profit from sermons; this may be the chief reason, because they do not chew the cud; they do not mediate on what they have heard” (*God’s Battle Plan for the Mind* by David W. Saxton, 68). Meditate on sermons.

Sermons – they have often been the butt of jokes (“Uncle Bob is having trouble sleeping, so we have been playing back Pastor Eric’s sermons to him. It seems to be helping.”) They need not be; they *ought not* be. They are God’s primary means of building his people up, so that we may glorify him and witness to others. May we take care how we hear.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Stan

From the Session

The July 2020 stated meeting of the Session was held on the 8th with Teaching Elder Mr. Layton giving his monthly report, noting any concerns, illness, or other concerns of our church. On recommendations from the Emergency Action and Safety Committee, the Session decided to continue our outside/drive-in Sunday morning services due to the continuation of the contagious virus. Ruling Elder Timm Dazey reported on the Central Carolina Presbytery meeting originally scheduled for May 2020 and was rescheduled. Other business regarding our church was discussed with action taken when necessary.

Although we are not having service in our sanctuary and sharing close fellowship with our church family, we must continue to be faithful to our Lord, especially our personal and spiritual walk with Jesus Christ. We may set aside more time for Scripture reading, maybe a one-on-one devotion such as talking to our Lord through personal prayer several times daily. These brief intimate moments with God encourage us as Christians to embrace our Lord more deeply in times such as this. The apostle John reveals to us in 1 John 3:2b-3, “But we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we see him as he is. Everyone who has their hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.”

Ruling Elder Billy Carter



WIC Update

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10. Please hold on to your faith and trust in God that He will guide us all through these times. May God bless our church family.

Sandra Futrell, WIC President

Announcements

- Unless otherwise notified via the bulletin and/or One-Call-Now, all church activities and services (other than 11 a.m. Lord’s Day worship) are suspended.
- If anyone needs help with essentials (grocery shopping, transportation, etc.) during these extraordinary times, please call either the church (910-652-5231), Pastor Stan (910-206-9035), or your shepherding elder.
- While working full-time, Timm Dazey continues 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 OFFERINGS:** Due to obvious COVID-19 concerns, we are not taking up the offering in our worship services at this time. However, persons may either place their offering in the plates in the sanctuary (prior to or immediately following the service) or send their offering to the church post office box which is #116.
- **PRAYER LIST:** Please call the church or email Pastor Stan with concerns to add to the Prayer List.
- **BULLETIN AND SONG SHEET:** Copies of the weekly bulletin and song sheet normally are emailed on Thursdays. To begin receiving these via email simply email Pastor Stan at stanelayton@gmail.com to let him know. For those who do not receive the bulletins via email, hard copies will be available in the church office by Friday of each week and in the vestibule prior to the worship service on Sunday mornings. Copies of old hymnals (the beige ones) are available in the vestibule for worshippers to take home, both to prepare for worship and for use in our worship services.
- **WEDDING POLICY:** At its 2/12/20 meeting, the Session adopted a Wedding Policy for First Presbyterian Church and its pastor(s). This policy explains God’s design for marriage, states our denomination’s constitutional standards concerning marriage and weddings, and provides the requirements for all persons desiring either to be married at First Presbyterian Church or by one our pastor(s). This wedding policy is now posted on the church website. We encourage all interested persons to visit our website and read through this policy. The link is: <https://ellerbepca.com/rst-presbyterian-church-wedding-policies/>
- **THE CHURCH AROUND THE WORLD:** The August issue of The Church Around the World has arrived and copies are available in the vestibule.

Anniversaries

2 M/M Dale DeWitt
 6 M/M James Watson
 19 M/M John Sears, Jr.
 29 M/M Jay Wagers



Happy
 Birthday!
 August

1 Ginny Layton
 1 Josh Chappell
 1 Louise Lucas
 2 Barbara McInnis
 2 Catelyn Baldwin
 3 Carolyn Sellers
 6 Carolyn Wagers
 8 Logan Moore
 9 Sami Poore
 10 Molly Greene
 11 Mark Tyson
 13 Hannah White
 13 Hayley Chavis
 15 Tom Covington
 17 Buck Scott
 18 Katie Tyson
 19 Jase Wagers
 19 Ellen Mabe
 20 Rev. James Watson
 24 Jackie Wright
 27 Makenzie Ward
 28 Billy Ray Dunn

Prayer List:



Armed Forces and Families, Our President and national leaders, the Persecuted Church and Christians worldwide, Peace and Unity in our country, Coronavirus concerns, Betsy Beane Family, Jack Berry, Billy Bostick, Lori Boyer, Donna Buckeridge, Jerry Britt, Austin Bryant, James Callicutt, Carol Chappell, Virgie Clark, Kevin Conner, A. T. Covington, Evon Craven, Alli Cundy, Casey Dawkins, Perry and Lisa Dawkins, Rev. Billy Dennis, Sharon DeWitt, Christina Greene Eller, Ellerbe First Responders, Jack Fetter, Mark Futrell, Libbie Haithcock, Kayla Hawkins, Becky Henderson, Doris Hill, Ray Hunter, Melanie Johnson, Ronnie Lovin, Meredith McBride, Max McCormick, Dan McInnis, Shannon McNeil, Peyton Monroe, Mary Murdock, Jewel Paul, Sami Poore, Sophia Potterfield, Dick Ransom, Cozette Rush, Carolyn Sellers, Mark Sellers, Jane Smith, Herman and Naomi Stutts, Jean Stutts, Clay Thomas, Katie Tyson, Hayley White, Colton Williams, Unspoken Requests

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Worship service remains at 11:00 am Sunday mornings unless notified otherwise.					August	1
2	3	4	5 7:00 pm Session meeting	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Church Officers:

Ruling Elders

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

WIC Officers

- Sandra Futrell, President
- Patricia McCormick, Vice-President
- Jan Stivers, Secretary
- Jane Carriker, Treasurer
- Barbara Wagers, Historian
- Beth Bryant, Mission to the World Chair
- Nancy Daugherty, Mission to North America Chair
- Lori Clark, Christian Growth Chair