

The First Edition

First Presbyterian Church, Ellerbe, NC

February 2025

www.pcanet.org
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From the Pastor:

“Using Technology to the Glory of God”

Technology. Should believers be for it or against? I think the Bible teaches that we should be for it and should use it for God’s glory. Let’s begin by defining technology. When we think of technology, we may begin to think about cell phones, iPads, and laptops. However, the concept of technology is much broader. Here are some definitions from miriamwebster.com (Ah ha, did you catch that? I am using technology to look up the meaning of the word.): 1. A practical application of knowledge especially in a particular area. An example would be medical technology. 2. A capability given by the practical application of knowledge. An example here would be fuel-saving technology for automobiles. 3. A manner of accomplishing a task especially usually technical processes, methods, or knowledge. An example would be new technologies for information storage. 4. The specialized aspects of a particular field of endeavor. An example would be educational technology.

Now with this broad understanding of technology, let’s think through some uses of technology in the Bible. How about Shamgar, the Israelite who used an ox goad to kill 600 Philistines (Judges 3:31). Now I am not sure what Shamgar’s other options were, but almost certainly he was being innovative. We might also think of the use of trumpets all throughout the Bible to prepare people for battle, to issue a call to worship, and to give praise to God in concert with other instruments. One verse in particular comes to mind. Paul is in prison and writes to Timothy – “When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments (2 Timothy 4:13). Throughout history the process of writing and record keeping has continued to “evolve.” Parchments were not quite electronic files or even our good old hardbacks and paperbacks, but they preserved documents in written form. And who was the first person to think about writing on animal skins?

Throughout history technology has been used for the glory of God. The oft-noted example is the Guttenberg printing press. Skipping the process of timely manual transmission, God worked through the printing press to allow the Protestant Reformation to take off and biblical doctrine to spread as books were printed and published. And while we still can hold our precious books in our hands, we can also, if we prefer (I do not), find them online. Perhaps better still we can preserve our writings in both physical and electronic form.

That said, using technology to the glory of God, also means we need to be wise and careful in our use of technology. One cautionary tale is found in Genesis 11 where sinful humanity congregates in Shinar and builds a ziggurat to make a name for themselves at the expense of God’s name. And, of course, we know how Satan can use cell phones and the Internet to draw man into all kinds of sin and mischief. So, we ought not to unthinkingly adopt new technology without carefully weighing the pros and the cons, including how it might be used and/or abused. We ought not be skeptical of all innovation; however, we ought to make sure we know what we are doing.

I go through all this to bring you the good news that the session has approved the Deacons’ recommendation for our church to contract with Five More Talents for a remake of our church’s website. Speaking of using technology, I think of how our recently deceased friend Austin Bryant had the vision of designing a website for our church. With help from others, that vision came to fruition and that website has served us well for the past 15 years. However, times have changed, and we need to continue to adapt to those changes. Five More Talents works with Reformed and Presbyterian churches just like ours to develop and maintain websites. Our present website will continue just as it is now, even while Beth Bryant assembles a team to work behind the scenes with Five More Talents to move us forward in this next stage of online presence. By doing this we are making a statement that we do want to labor for the spread of the gospel as our website encourages people to visit our church. But we don’t intend this website to simply be for potential visitors. We are looking at ways it can be used by our members. This won’t happen overnight, but by God’s grace, it will happen. To God be the glory.

Grace & Peace, Pastor Stan

From the Session

Mr. Layton called the stated meeting to order on Wednesday, January 14. and Jimmy Wagers had the opening prayer. Mr. Layton declared a quorum and his scripture reading came from 2 Peter 1:3-8. Usual perfunctory session business was held and then proceeded to the ongoing and new business.

The first order of business was the examination of the Ruling Elder candidates Chris Meacham, Mark Tyson and Tommy White. Examinations of these candidates were sustained by the session and the right hand of fellowship was given to each. The Congregational meeting for the purpose to elect three Ruling elders will be on Sunday, February 23, 2025 immediately following the worship service.

The Session received the following reports: Church Treasurer's monthly report; Mr. Layton's monthly report.

A season of prayer was led by Rickie DeWitt for members of our congregation who are facing surgeries, our families who have lost loved ones, praying for the beginning of the new year of worship services, praying for our sick members, and for members facing other difficulties.

Other business included the following:

- Approval of developing a new church website using Five More Talents.
- Approval for the 2025 General Assembly attendance June 21-27 in Chattanooga, TN.
- Appointment of 2025 Revival Committee (revival is in March) as follows: Rickie Dewitt, convener; Mr. Layton; Jesse McQueen; Beth Meacham and Patricia McCormick.
- Approval of the Women's Ministry Love Gift for Solis Christus.

The next stated meeting is February 12, 2025. The meeting adjourned with Jimmy Wagers offering the closing prayer.

Jimmy Wagers, *Clerk of Session*

Women's Ministry Update

The first meeting of the new Women's Ministry (WM) was held Tuesday, January 28 after the covered dish Love Gift dinner. Immediately following the dinner, Chairman of Missions to North America Lori Clark introduced two ladies from Solus Christus, a residential stepping stone for women who desire freedom from substance abuse by transforming women through hope, healing, and recovery in Christ. Both ladies gave their testimonials and shared information about the residence. The gospel of Jesus Christ is shared at least once a day, and services are free to clients in this safe place. Since opening in 2007, they have served 1600 ladies and in 2024, 67 went through the program.

When women come to the residence, often they do not have clothing or hygiene products. Solus Christus is hosting an open house for our church on Saturday, February 22, and the bus will leave at 8:30 am, returning at approximately 3:00 pm. Lunch is included, and the WM is collecting clean, gently used clothes and hygiene products that will be delivered during the open house (no alcohol based products). Donations can be left in the main part of the old fellowship hall. In addition, an individual hygiene bag may be filled and 20 empty bags are available in the fellowship hall. All items should be placed in the fellowship hall by the 22nd. The Love Gift offering will remain open through Sunday, February 16. Please make a note on your offering that it is to be used for this purpose. For complete information about this ministry, visit www.soluschristusinc.org.

Thank you to everyone who helped take down the church Christmas decorations, and to those who helped set up, host, and take down the O Holy Night Around the World nativity display. The 2025 church membership directory has been finalized and copies will be available this month. Also, the new WM Constitution and Bylaws has been edited and is with the Session for review.

Current projects in addition to Solus Christus include the following and everyone is encouraged to participate:

- Souper Bowl nonperishable food items for the local food pantry are being collected through February. There is a box in the vestibule.
- Valentine's luncheon, Sunday, February 16 immediately following the worship service. The WM is serving the meal and everyone is invited to attend.
- Saturday, March 22, there will be a church clean-up day beginning at 9:00 am. The town of Ellerbe will have a dumpster truck at the church. This event is open for everyone.

The next WM meeting is Tuesday, February 25 at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall with the dinner and Bible study hosted by Beth Meacham. The lesson is number four from the book Self Control. If you need a copy of the literature, please let me know.

Beth Meacham, *WM President*

Announcements

REPAIRS TO COLUMNS: Anyone wishing to give toward the repair of the columns in the front of the sanctuary should designate their check “church columns.”

SOUPER BOWL FOOD DRIVE: The Women’s Ministry is collecting non-perishable food for the annual “Souper Bowl” food drive. There is a box placed in the vestibule for the donations and the collection will run through February. All food collected will be delivered to our local food bank to be distributed to those in need in our area. Thank you for supporting this most worthy ministry.

PRAYER WITH THE PASTOR: Starting Wednesday, February 5th, Pastor Stan will be in the conference room for prayer from 6:00 – 7:00 PM. This time will be dedicated to praying for the church, including its members, officers, meetings, ministries, services, etc.. During February and March, a significant portion of this time will be dedicated to praying for our upcoming Revival services March 30th – April 2nd.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO ELECT ELDERS: Due to a scheduling conflict the congregational meeting has been rescheduled from Sunday, February 16th to Sunday, February 23rd. As per the *PCA Book of Church Order chapter 24*, the purpose of this meeting is to vote on the following men for the office of Ruling Elder: Chris Meacham, Mark Tyson, and Tommy White.

LORD’S SUPPER IN EVENING SERVICE TONIGHT: This evening, we will be observing the Lord’s Supper, which is a “means of grace” by which Jesus graciously feeds and grows his people. Since, by Christ’s appointment, this meal sets forth the “Communion of the Saints,” the Session invites all those who profess the true religion and are communicants in good standing in any evangelical church (BCO 58-4). We further encourage all who would receive the Lord’s Supper to “examine themselves, as to their knowledge to discern the Lord’s body, as to their faith to feed on him, and as to their repentance, love, and new obedience, lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment on themselves” (WSC 97).

VALENTINES LUNCHEON: The annual Valentine’s Luncheon is Sunday, February 16th immediately following the worship service. The Women’s Ministry is serving the meal in the fellowship hall. There is no need to RSVP and everyone is welcome to attend.

LOVE GIFT OFFERING: The annual Love Gift offering will benefit Solus Christus, a residential stepping stone for women who desire freedom from substance abuse by transforming women through hope, healing, and recovery in Christ. The offering will remain open through Sunday February 16th. Please make a note on your offering that it is to be used for this purpose. For complete information about this ministry, visit www.solusccristusinc.org.

OPEN HOUSE AT SOLUS CHRISTUS: Solus Christus is hosting an open house for our church on Saturday, February 22nd. Lunch is included. The church bus will depart at 8:30 am and return at approximately 3:00pm. A total number of attendees is needed, so please RSVP to WM Secretary Jan Stivers by Tuesday, February 18th. 910-995-3975 or kevinandjan90@gmail.com. Donations of clean, gently used clothing along with hygiene products and make-up are being collected for delivery on Feb. 22nd. In addition, if you would like to fill an individual hygiene bag with items for residents, there are 20 bags (in various colors) in the old fellowship hall. Examples to include in the bag: Hair brush, socks, comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, lotion, shampoo, hair accessories, etc. No products with alcohol (example: hand sanitizer) can be used. All donations should be left in the main room of the old fellowship hall by Feb. 22. For complete information about this ministry visit www.soluschristusinc.org.

Church Officers:

Ruling Elders

- Bill Carter, Elder Emeritus
- Tim Clark
- Rickie DeWitt
- Richard Smith
- Jimmy Wagers
- Tony Yates

Deacons:

- Patrick Bryant
- Tim Grotenhuis
- Chris Meacham
- Jesse McQueen
- Buck Smith
- Kevin Stivers
- Tommy White

WM Officers

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



RAYER LIST: President and other national leaders, the Persecuted Church and Christians worldwide, Samuel Austin, Beverly Sears Barber, Christian Barrett, Karen Britt family, Daniel Brown, Billy Carter, Mary Ellen Carter, Ted Carter, Vera Carter, Vergie Clark, Kevin Conner, Ronald Lee Cook, Kevin Craven, Tony Craven, Alli Cundy, Cindy Daniels, Sharon DeWitt, Ruby Dunn, Ellerbe First Responders, Carsyn Faile, Fred Fletcher, Mark Futrell, Deborah Greene, Jessica H., Becky Henderson, Pete Herron, Dorris Hill family, Ken Hill, Lowell Hill family, Melanie Johnson, Shirley Lovin, Anne McCaskill family, Donna McCormick, Bill McFayden, Patsy Dunn McIntyre, Julia McIntosh, Shannon McNeil, Ricky Monroe, Trevor Moss, Morgan North, Leo Poole, Sophia Potterfield, Barbara Sears, Doris Sears, Tina Sellers, Tim Ward, Mica Way, Amanda Watson, Donna White, Hayley White, Alan and Tanya Williams, Curtis Wright, unspoken requests.



Happy
Birthday
February

- 5 John Sears, Jr.
- 8 Ted Futrell
- 12 Lauren Clark
- 13 Kevin Stivers
- 17 Barbara Sears
- 27 Wayne Wright



**February
Anniversaries**
4 M/M Stan Layton

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
February 2025	Sunday School Assembly is in the sanctuary at 10:00 am, classes are at 10:15. Worship service is at 11:00 am Sunday mornings in the sanctuary.					1
2 6:00 pm Evening Worship Service	3	4 7:00 pm Deacon's Meeting	5 6:00 pm Prayer with the Pastor, old fellowship hall	6	7	8
9 6:00 pm Evening Worship Service	10	11	12 6:00 pm Prayer with the Pastor, old fellowship hall 7:00 pm Session Meeting	13	14	15
16 12:00 pm Valentine Luncheon, fellow- ship hall 6:00 pm Evening Worship Service	17	18	19 6:00 pm Prayer with the Pastor, old fellowship hall	20	21	22 8:30 am Bus departs for Solus Christus (returns approx. 3:00 pm) 9:00 am Central Caroli- na Presbytery (Reformed Theological Seminary)
23 12:00 pm Congrega- tional Meeting 6:00 pm Evening Worship Service	24	25 6:30 pm Wom- en's Ministry, fellowship hall	26 6:00 pm Prayer with the Pastor, old fellowship hall	27	28	March 1 Souper Bowl food items due.