

The First Edition

First Presbyterian Church, Ellerbe, NC

February 2024

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

Volume XXXIV Edition 2

From the Pastor:

“Revival: Speak to the Bones and Pray for the Wind”

By the time you read this our annual Revival week will be less than three months away. Since Dr. Robertson has selected “Praying for Revival” as his theme, I want to spend the next three newsletter columns looking at passages which inform us how prayer and revival are so vitally connected. We begin with a familiar passage to many – Ezekiel 37:14, the so called “Valley of Dry Bones” passage.

The passage begins with the Lord carrying the prophet out into a valley of dry bones. The dry bones symbolize the nation of Israel in exile, apparently dead with all hope lost. It is in this context, that the Lord commands the prophet to do a very strange thing. He commands Ezekiel to prophesy over the bones and promises that if the prophet does, he (the Lord) will cause the bones to come to life forming resurrected bodies (vv. 1-6). The prophet asks no questions and raises no objections; rather, he speaks to the bones. And, lo and behold, the bones come together, joints, ligaments, muscle and skin. So, we have gone from bleached bones to stray corpses; all the same there is no breath in the bodies (vv. 7-8).

So, the Lord continues with stage two of the resurrection process. He orders the prophet to “Prophesy to the breath.” Perhaps this is the best place for me to tell you that the Hebrew word for “breath” can also be translated “wind” or “spirit.” Back to the text, the prophet is to say: “Thus says the LORD God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live” (v. 9). The prophet again trusts and obeys, and guess what happens. We read, “The breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army” (10). From there the Lord explains to the prophet that the bones are the “whole house of Israel.” He tells Ezekiel that he will do a work in them which is akin to the resurrection of the dead. He tells him that Israel will know that the Lord is God when he opens their graves and raises them to life. Then he reiterates that he will put his Spirit within them and they will live and he concludes, “Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken and I will do it, declares the LORD” (vv. 11-4).

The whole scene looks forward to the return of Israel from exile but also to the resurrection of Israel in the form of the church in the New Testament. It also hints at the physical resurrection of the dead – Jesus first, then later believers. Furthermore, it is a picture of spiritual resurrection. And finally, it is a picture of what God does in times of revival. He brings seemingly dead churches to life by bringing to life human beings, formerly dead in their sins and trespasses. And there are essentially, two primary elements – preaching (prophesying, understood as “forthtelling the word of God”) and praying/petitioning.

While I was in seminary, since there was no other place to take my daily health walk, I used to ride to a cemetery less than a mile away to take my walk. Now I walked but even though I was a cemetery, I never once thought about practicing my preaching out there in the middle of that graveyard. I wouldn’t say cemeteries spook me out, but still it was often near dark; so, I came, I walked, and I left. Yet that is precisely what preachers are supposed to do. There are quite often people in our congregations who are spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1-3) and there is nothing they can do to raise themselves to life. Yet the same word of Christ that raised Lazarus to physical life, can raise spiritual corpses to life. God does that when he saves any individual soul. And he does it massive numbers during periods of revival.

Yet as Ezekiel 37 teaches, all the preaching/prophesying in the world does absolutely no good, unless the Holy Spirit comes to bring life to the dead. And so, we not only preach for revival but also pray for it. After all, it was our Savior who said, “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Lk. 11:13 ESV) I will close with this quote by David Cassidy (a PCA pastor, not the Partridge guy): “Speak to the bones and pray for the wind.” That is a summary of the message of Ezekiel 37:1-14 and it is how we should think about revival. So, as we prepare for Revival week, let’s pray for those who will preach and those who will hear. And may the Lord bring life to the dead. May he revive dead spirits; may he revive his church.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Stan



WIC Update

The Quarterly Women in the Church (WIC) meeting was moved to the same night as the Circle meeting since severe storms and wind were in the area the night of the scheduled meeting. The meeting was held at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, January 30th. The meeting began with a meal, then Sandra Futrell, Chairman of Christian Growth had the program led by Peggy Stone. Peggy shared information she compiled titled, "Some Good News." These are Christian resources readily available on the internet. These include the following:

- Third Millennium Ministries with biblical education for free. This includes free online seminary courses for anyone and was founded by RTS professor and bestselling author Dr. Richard Pratt.
- Bible Project was founded in 2014 by a non-profit organization with over 180 short videos, mostly under 13 minutes long, featuring every book of the Bible and important Christianity topics.
- iBible with the goal of completing a "visual narrative" of the entire Bible in 150 "chapters" by 2030 with 7000+ translations.
- The Chosen is the first multi-season TV series about the life and ministry of Jesus.
- YouTube testimonies of converts to Christianity from Delafe Testimonies with 406 videos of converts.

Copies of the Annual Women in the Church Plan for 2024 are available in the vestibule. Everyone is invited to the annual valentine luncheon on Sunday, February 18 with takeout meals after the worship service. Simply come by the fellowship hall to pick up their meal.

Throughout the year, anyone who would like to place special flowers in the sanctuary are encouraged to do so. Please contact the women in the church flower committee. Thank you to everyone who helped take down the church Christmas decorations. All Fellowship Hall Christmas decorations were put in the outdoor storage building.

Beth Meacham, *WIC President*



Circle ladies met on Tuesday January 30th, at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall. This was a joint meeting with WIC. We congratulate Tim & Natasha Grottenhuis on the birth of their son, Toren Allen – we are so excited for this new addition!

We reviewed our Circle Agenda for 2024 and made updates. We are collecting food donations for our Souper Bowl and another box will be placed in the fellowship hall to go along with the box located in the vestibule. The collection will run through mid-February.

The Valentine takeout meal will consist of chicken and dumplings, green beans, slaw and a dinner roll with Little Debbie cakes for dessert. These will be available for pickup after the worship service on Sunday, February 18, and they will also be delivered to the shut-ins.

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 27th, 2024 at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall. Donna White will be preparing our meal with Beth Bryant presenting lesson 5 from our study of **Fruit of the Spirit – Gentleness**.

Patricia McCormick, *Secretary*

Announcements

- **SOUPER BOWL FOOD DRIVE:** Circle ladies are collecting non-perishable food for their annual “Souper Bowl” food drive. There is a box placed in the fellowship hall for the donations and the collection will run through mid-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.
- **VALENTINE LUNCHEON:** The annual valentine luncheon will be held Sunday, February 18 with takeout meals after the worship service. Everyone is invited to come by the fellowship hall to pick up their meal. This is sponsored by the Women in the Church.
- **SPECIAL FLOWERS:** Anyone would like to place special flowers in the sanctuary, you are welcome to do so on any Sunday. Please contact the women in the church flower committee.
- **MID-WEEK PRAYER MEETING:** The mid-week prayer meeting has resumed and now has a different format. Instead of a lengthier Bible lesson, Pastor Layton will be giving a brief devotion from the book of Acts (normally) which will be followed by a concentrated season of prayer. Everyone is invited to come and pray.
- **EVENING WORSHIP:** Our evening worship service is at 5:30 p.m. Along with other biblical elements of worship, Pastor Layton is preaching through the book of Revelation. Everyone is encouraged to prepare to attend. There is no better way to close the Lord’s Day than with corporate worship.
- The session has approved our 2024 Revival services for April 14th – 17th with Dr. O. Palmer Robertson as the keynote speaker on Sunday, April 14th. Dr. Robertson is one of the founding members of the PCA and has written numerous books, including *The Christ of the Covenants*. Dr. Robertson has requested that we start praying now that the Lord would do a mighty work among us during Revival.
- Though he is now living in Florida, Timm Dazey continues to pursue seminary studies online through Reformed Theological Seminary. 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, 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

WIC Officers

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



Happy
Birthday
February



PRAYER LIST: President and other national leaders, the Persecuted Church and Christians worldwide, Christian Barrett, Jason Bennett, Austin Bryant, Donna Buckeridge, Neal Cadieu, Anthony Capel, Billy Carter, Mary Ellen Carter, Ted Carter, Vera Carter, Vergie Clark, Kevin Conner, Ronald Lee Cook, Tom Covington, Kevin Craven, Tony Craven, Alli Cundy, Cindy Daniels, Sharon DeWitt, Scott Dunn, Ellerbe First Responders, Fred Fletcher, Mark Futrell, Mary Ellen Grotenhuis, Bella Haynes, Becky Henderson, Pete Herron, Melanie Johnson, Douglas Kelly, Ben Layton, Pam Lynthacum, Donna McCormick, Bill McFayden, Robert McInnis family, Patsy Dunn McIntyre, Lee McKenzie, Julia McIntosh, Shannon McNeil, Jimmy Meacham, Mickey Meacham, Zachery Meacham, Peyton Monroe, Janet Monroe, Ricky Monroe, Trevor Moss, Morgan North, Doug Parsons, Elizabeth Potterfield, Sophia Potterfield, Mike Ransom family, Doris Sears, Tina Sellers, Betty Smith, Jane Smith, Katie Tyson, Amanda Watson, Christie Weatherly, Jewell Weatherly, Hayley White, Curtis Wright, Vera Wright, unspoken Requests

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



Anniversaries
4 M/M Stan Layton

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
February 2024	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	3
4 5:15 pm Called Session Meeting 5:30 pm Worship Service; the Lord's Supper will be observed	5	6	7 6:00 pm Bible Study/ Prayer 7:00 Deacon's Meeting	8	9	10 7:00 am Men of the Covenant Breakfast
11 5:30 pm Worship Service	12	13	14 6:00 pm Bible Study/ Prayer 7:00 pm Session Meeting	15	16	17
18 12:00 Valentine Luncheon take-out, fellowship hall 5:30 pm Worship Service	19	20	21 6:00 pm Bible Study/ Prayer	22 7:00 pm Revival Committee	23	24 9:00 am Central Carolina Presbytery meeting, Hope Community Church
25 5:30 pm Worship Service	26	27 6:30 pm Circle Meeting	28 6:00 pm Bible Study/ Prayer	29		