

The First Edition

First Presbyterian Church, Ellerbe, NC

April 2025

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

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From the Pastor:

“The Sychar Revival”

What can happen when one person gets really excited about Jesus? What are the possibilities for revival in a small town? In one sense, of course, the answer is, “That depends on how the Holy Spirit moves” (John 3:8). In another sense, don’t underestimate the possibilities if just one person meets Jesus, becomes friends with Him, and then proceeds to tell others about Him. That is what happened long ago just outside the tiny village of Sychar.

You are likely familiar with the story, though perhaps more familiar with the first part than the last. Jesus was on his way from Judea in the south to Galilee in the north. He intentionally went out of his way to go through a town named Sychar near Jacob’s well. He headed outside town to that well and encountered a woman there. He began by asking her for a drink. She was surprised given that she was not only a woman, but also a Samaritan and, what’s more, had shall we say a “bad reputation.” He wound up telling her that he could give her something better than the water which quenches temporal thirst. He could give her “living water,” which of course only puzzled her. The conversation progressed until the point Jesus decided to show her why she needed living water: she had been drinking from dry cisterns, hardly knew it, and certainly was not the better for it. At any rate, Jesus told her that if she would only drink the water which only He could give, then she would never thirst again. She replied, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water” (vv. 9-15).

Well, an evangelist who only wanted to claim a “Christian scalp” with no concern for seeing a true conversion would have quickly told her that he was that living water, gotten her to pray a “sinner’s prayer,” and returned to his disciples to announce his victory. Jesus knew better. He knew she was not quite ready. So, he began to “meddle” as some have called it when application gets personal. “Go, call your husband, and come here” (v. 16). She responds “rightly” that she has no husband. He informs her that she is correct and does not have just one but has had five and is not married to her current roommate (vv. 17-8).

Well, the lady was feeling a bit uncomfortable, and she did what any of us would have done. She switched the topic. Let’s talk worship, she said. Let’s talk theology (a good thing in itself but sometimes can be cover for talking about the sin in our life). She had questions about the proper place to worship, a fair question. Was it Jerusalem (according to the Jews) or Samaria (as per the Samaritans)? Jesus wasn’t biting on that very important question. Rather, he pointed forward to a day when the place people worship would not matter so much as who they worship and how (vv. 19-24).

The conversation continues to progress with the woman perhaps hoping that she has dodged the interrogation into her personal life. She informs him that she is looking forward to the Messiah, at least they have that in common and probably a safe conversation direction. Most likely to her amazement Jesus responds, “I who speak to you am he” (v. 28). The disciples return only to quietly “marvel” that Jesus was talking with her. As for the woman, she has heard enough and knows enough. She quickly proceeds back into town to proclaim the “good news” – “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did? Can this be the Christ?” As a result, all the townsfolk head out to find Jesus (vv. 27-30).

John goes on to tell us, “Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony” (v. 39). And what was that testimony? “He told me everything that I ever did.” As a result, many Samaritans begged Jesus to stay with them. He stayed two days, and we are told that many more believed. It was not ultimately the woman’s testimony which drew them to faith. It was Jesus himself. However, the woman’s testimony was sufficient to move them to investigate. They met him and believed because they had seen him with their own eyes and heard him with their own ears. They were convinced he was indeed “the Savior of the world” (vv. Vv. 39-42). It is always that way when people truly investigate to see who Jesus truly is.

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Back to that woman's testimony. The woman's words were, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did" (29a). To make sure we get the point John repeats her testimony, "He told me all that I ever did" (v. 39). Do you hear what she is saying? It is not, "He told me all the good things I did and couldn't help but love me." No, she is saying (and they know what she is saying), "He told me all the bad things I have done and loved me anyway." She loved him for that reason, and she believed him for that reason. She had found the long-awaited Messiah and guess what? The long-awaited Messiah was a friend of sinners, and sinners of the worst sort. She couldn't keep the good news to herself. She went back into town and told everyone she met. They heard her testimony, investigated for themselves, and many in the town believed. That is the story of revival. Many people find Jesus to be a friend of sinners. They then tell others they have met Jesus and found him to be a friend of sinners. Those investigate, many believe, the church grows, and the town is transformed.

Yes, that's revival. And if the Holy Spirit moves, it could happen in Ellerbe. We can't, of course, decide whether such a revival will come or when, but we can pray and we can witness, bear witness to Jesus, "the sinner's friend." If we do, who knows what God might do?

Grace & Peace, Pastor Stan

From the Session

Mr. Layton called the stated Session meeting to order on Wednesday, March 12 and Mark Tyson opened with prayer. A quorum was declared by Mr. Layton and he read scripture from Acts 1: 12-14. All members of the Session were present. Usual perfunctory Session business was held and then proceeded to our ongoing and new business. The Session received the following reports:

- 1) Church Treasurer's monthly report;
- 2) Mr. Layton's monthly report.

New business included approval of the calendar for Session members to attend as commissioners to the Central Carolina Presbytery for the year 2025 as follows:

- February: Tim Clark, Tony Yates
- May: Rickie DeWitt, Tommy White
- August: Richard Smith, Mark Tyson
- November: Chris Meacham, Jimmy Wagers

Mr. Layton will attend all meetings.

The Session then had a season of prayer for various church members experiencing illnesses and hospitalization.

Other business included the following:

- Combine the Sunday School classes on March 30th with our revival speaker teaching.
- Approval to distribute the revival flyers among our community.
- Approval of recognition on April 6th of the late William Austin Bryant as Elder Emeritus which was awarded to Austin at the stated Session meeting in December 2024. His certificate will be presented to his wife, Beth, and their sons Patrick and Alex along with their families.
- Approval to change the communion service from April 6th to April 13th.

The next stated meeting is April 9th. The meeting adjourned with Richard Smith offering the closing prayer.

Jimmy Wagers, *Clerk of Session*

Church Officers:

Ruling Elders

- Bill Carter, Elder Emeritus
- Tim Clark
- Rickie DeWitt
- Chris Meacham
- Richard Smith
- Mark Tyson
- Jimmy Wagers
- Tommy White
- Tony Yates

Deacons:

- Patrick Bryant
- Tim Grotenhuis
- Jesse McQueen
- Buck Smith
- Kevin Stivers

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

Women's Ministry Update

The Women's Ministry monthly meeting was held Tuesday, March 25th at 6:30 pm with 14 ladies present. We enjoyed a delicious salad dinner. I read a devotion from 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 titled *Our Merciful and Comforting Father*.

Thank you to everyone who helped clean out the downstairs Sunday School classroom, other rooms and closets on March 22nd. We filled a dumpster truck from the town of Ellerbe! Upcoming events were reviewed including the covered dish luncheon following the Revival service on March 30th, the covered dish dinner and service on Maundy Thursday, April 17th, at 6:30 pm, the annual Easter Egg and Scavenger Hunt with a pizza lunch on Saturday, April 19, and the Easter Sunrise Service and breakfast on Sunday, April 20.

There was not a program during the meeting and instead we stuffed Easter eggs with candy. The next meeting is Tuesday, April 29 and Chairman of Christian Growth Beth Bryant will have the program. There will not be a meal at the April meeting. All ladies are welcome to join us!

Beth Meacham, *WM President*

Announcements

REVIVAL SERVICES: Our annual Revival services are Sunday, March 30th through Wednesday, April 2nd. Our speaker this year is Dr. Neil Stewart, the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC and this year's theme is "Jesus, the Sinner's Friend." Everyone is encouraged to pray for these services, as well as invite friends, acquaintances, and even strangers.

REVIVAL LUNCHEON: There will be a covered dish luncheon after the Revival Worship Service on Sunday, March 30th hosted by the Women's Ministry. Everyone is invited to attend.

COMBINED SUNDAY SCHOOL: We will not be having our normal Sunday School classes next Sunday but will instead be having a combined Sunday School class for all ages in the fellowship hall with our Revival speaker, Dr. Neil Stewart teaching.

PRAYER WITH THE PASTOR: Each Wednesday (except for March 5th) from 6:00 – 6:55 PM Pastor Stan will be in the conference room for prayer with anyone who would like to join him. This time will be dedicated to praying for the church, including its members, officers, meetings, ministries, services, etc.. During February and March, a significant

EVIDENCES OF A BACKSLIDDEN CONDITION / REVIVAL PRAYER GUIDE: Our annual Revival services are scheduled for March 30th – April 2nd. As we look forward to these services, we encourage everyone to utilize the preparation guide located in our vestibule - "Evidences of a Backslidden Condition" / "Revival Prayer Guide." Together these are a valuable tool for diagnosing one's own spiritual condition, as well as that of our church, and also provide guidance in how to pray specifically for Revival.

COVERED DISH AND MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE: There will be a covered dish dinner Thursday, April 17th, at 6:30 p.m., which will be followed by the Maundy Thursday service at approximately 7:30 p.m. The Lord's Supper will be observed in the Maundy Thursday service, and everyone is encouraged to prepare accordingly.

EASTER EGG AND SCAVENGER HUNT: An Easter Egg and Scavenger hunt with a pizza lunch is being hosted by the Women's Ministry on Saturday, April 19, at 11:00 am in the fellowship hall. Please invite your family and friends.

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE AND BREAKFAST: The Easter Sunrise Service will be held on Sunday, April 20 at 7:00 am on the grounds behind the fellowship hall. Breakfast will be served after the service



PRAYER LIST: President and other national leaders, the Persecuted Church and Christians worldwide, Steve Allen, Samuel Austin, Beverly Sears Barber, Christian Barrett, 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, Nancy Wallace Hunter, Joey Jernigan, Melanie Johnson, Shirley Lovin, Donna McCormick, Bill McFayden, Patsy Dunn McIntyre, Julia McIntosh, Barbara McInnis, Shannon McNeil, Ricky Monroe, Trevor Moss, Morgan North, Leo Poole, Sophia Potterfield, Daniel Ryne, Barbara Sears, Doris Sears, Tina Sellers, Herman Stutts, Tim Ward, Tony Ward, Mica Way, Amanda Watson, Donna White, Hayley White, Curtis Wright, unspoken requests.



Happy
Birthday
April

4 Brooke Monroe
6 Julia McIntosh
7 Karen Hairfield
8 Kellee Greene
10 Jane Carriker
11 Kimberly Latta
18 Tommy White
23 D Kennett
28 Wessley Futrell
29 Regina Uribe

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.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
March 30 10:15 am Combined Sunday School Class 12:00 Covered dish lunch 5:30 Revival Prayer 6:00 pm Revival	31 12:00 Revival Prayer Meeting 6:30 Revival Prayer Service 7:00 pm Revival	April 1 12:00 Revival Prayer Meeting 6:30 Revival Prayer Service 7:00 pm Revival	2 12:00 Revival Prayer Meeting 6:30 Revival Prayer Service 7:00 pm Revival	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 6:00 pm Prayer meeting 7:00 pm Joint Session/Deacon meeting	10 7:00 pm Choir Practice	11	12
13 11:00 The Lord's Sup- per during Worship 6:00 pm Worship Service	14	15	16 6:00 pm Prayer meeting	17 6:30 pm Maundy Thursday Ser- vice & covered dish dinner	18	19 11:00 Easter egg & Scaven- ger hunt with pizza
20 Happy Easter! 7:00 am Easter Sunrise Service & breakfast 6:00 pm Worship Service	21	22	23	24 7:00 pm Choir Practice	25	26
27 6:00 pm Worship Service	28	29 6:30 Women's Ministry meeting	30 6:00 pm Prayer meeting			

REVIVAL SERVICES 2025

Revival: The theme for this year's Revival is "Jesus, the Sinner's Friend" (Luke 5:12-32). With us for Sunday School, as well as our morning and evening service on Sunday is Dr. Neil C. Stewart, Senior Pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC. Raised in Northern Ireland, Dr. Stewart came to faith as a teenager through the witness of high school friends. He studied medicine at the Queen's University of Belfast, where he met and married Catherine Jane Johnson. In his final year of medical school, Neil was awarded the Ulster Hospital Gold Medal for his studies in medicine, general and orthopedic surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics, and gynecology. He was elected a member of the Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health in 1997. As a pediatrician, Neil served in the historic Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

Our revival services begin Sunday, March 30th with Sunday School at 10 am and worship service at 11 am. On Sunday evening there will be a pre-service prayer meeting at 5:30 pm followed by worship at 6 pm. On Monday through Wednesday, the pre-service prayer meeting will be at 6:30 pm followed by the worship service at 7 pm. Juan Rodriguez, the Reformed University Fellowship campus minister for UNC-Charlotte will be preaching Monday evening; Bo Collins, the pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church (Southern Pines), Tuesday evening; and Greg Salazar, the organizing pastor of the Myers Park Mission Church (Charlotte), Wednesday evening.

Themes: The themes for the services will be as follows:

Sunday School Combined Class	"The Outcast Made Clean."
Sunday Morning	"The Helpless Made Whole"
Sunday Night	"The Traitor Brought Home"
Monday Night	"Jesus, My Best Friend"
Tuesday Night	"The Lifter of My Head"
Wednesday Night	"Helping Blind Disciples"

Prayer Services: Pre-service prayer meetings will be held in the conference room with Mr. Layton leading the prayer. They will be held Sunday at 5:30 pm, with the worship service to follow at 6:00 pm. And Monday through Wednesday at 6:30 pm followed by the worship service at 7:00 pm. Everyone is encouraged to come and pray for our revival services.

Noon Prayer Meetings: At Noon Monday-Wednesday we will be having a prayer meeting which will begin with a brief devotion from one of our Ruling Elders followed by a season of prayer for revival and for our Revival services. Attendees are welcome to bring their lunch.

Meal: There will be a covered dish lunch on Sunday, March 30th with the Women's Ministry hosting.

Special Music: Special music will be provided Sunday Morning and each evening:

Sunday Night	PCA Community Choir
Monday Night	Crestview Church Choir
Tuesday Night	First Baptist Church Choir
Wednesday Night	The Cameronian Quartet

Nursery: Nursery will be provided as needed each evening beginning at 5:30 pm on Sunday and 6:30 pm Monday - Wednesday so that parents can attend the nightly prayer meetings and services.

Transportation: Please contact the church at (910) 652-5231 or Jesse McQueen at (910) 995-8300..