

# Under Our Roof

First Presbyterian Church, Covington, VA

June 2021

*“Be still, and know that I am God!” (Psalm 46:10, NRSV)*

As the saying goes; “I have places to go, people to see.” There is much to accomplish. Even as we have more and more technological advances to make life easier, it seems that each day is full of busyness. Even retired folks are busy. I have a few friends who are retired and tell me that they are always doing something. Taking time to sit still is a luxury.

And even when we take time to sit, is it still? There seems to always be some sort of background noise. The radio is playing, the television is on, people are talking, phones are ringing. And sometimes the noise is in our thoughts. We are anxious, worried, fearful, or angry. Our minds are not still enough to hear God.

Psalm 46 was written at a time when the nation of Israel was fighting with neighboring nations. As the Psalm opens we hear about the power of God and the security that we have because of that power. “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1)

“Be still, and know that I am God.” We know that God is almighty and powerful. We know that God is in control. We do not need to struggle and fight against those things that distract us or cause us anxiety or make us afraid.

We need to stop the busyness and stop listening to the clamor around us so that the peace of Jesus can envelop us. We need to slow down so that the Holy Spirit can catch up with us.

This summer as you make your plans for vacations or long weekends, for time away. Remember that God is with you in all of it. I ask you to “be still” and know that God is God and everything is in God’s hands.

*Pastor Susi*



# JUNE

## Birthdays

3 Emmett Keller  
13 Blake Oliver  
13 Marsha Patterson  
16 Charlotte Ginn  
17 John Rollinson  
18 Rob Lindstrom  
21 Charlie Deacon  
21 Bill Caperton  
22 Jamie Lloyd  
22 Kaylie Carter  
23 Daniel Pillow

## Pastor Susi Is Now Able to Make Visits!

Now that many people have been vaccinated and some of the gathering restrictions have been lifted Pastor Susi is able to visit folks. If there is anyone who would like a visit from her call 540-958-3941 to arrange a day and time. Pastor Susi would be happy to bring communion to the visit as well.



Let's do good to all people.

Galatians 6:10, NASB



# Boys Home Cabin

## Ready to Move to the Woods

First Presbyterian Church successfully submitted a grant application to the Presbytery of the Peaks in the fall of 2020 that was targeted for at-risk children and youth in our neighborhood and to provide seed money for local mission service. The grant funding to Boys Home did both with \$2,500 being granted. The cabin was constructed by the students in the trades programs at Boys Home, being build in a palletized style at the Boys Home campus. It will now be broken down into sections and brought up to a scenic location on the hill for final construction, at which time we will be invited up to visit it on site. The cabin will become a place for the boys to enjoy in their free time. It was truly a joy to see the boys' pride in their accomplishments.



**Figure 1.** Boys Home students pose with Barbara Hise and Rev. Susi Ennis after the May 11th presentation of the newly-constructed modular cabin.



**Figure 2.** Special Projects Manager, Louis Sarratt, explains some of the building processes and training that went into the construction of the modular cabin. Students who had a hand in some part of the construction process were present for the meeting.



**Figure 3.** The original design of the cabin was expanded to include a sleeping loft above the front porch, along with a loft above the main section of the cabin and bunk. Boys Home student, Seth, provides details regarding the construction and design to Rev. Ennis.



**Figure 4.** The nearly-completed cabin, constructed by students at Boys Home, is ready to be deconstructed, transported, and reconstructed on the chosen site on the mountain property behind the main campus. Mr. Sarratt and the students specifically designed the cabin in a modular design to enable initial construction inside the Trades Building.

-- Mission & Service Committee

# To Applaud Or Not to Applaud

In my life, I make it a point to avoid any and all controversy, as much as possible. Certainly, among family, friends, in church and other compatible organizations, that has always been my approach unless serious life or moral issues are involved.

Applause in church is definitely not a life or moral issue, but it does seem to have importance regarding feelings of worship form and participation here at First Presbyterian Church.

It is my hope that none of us would be so fixed in our opinions that we cannot hear or seek to understand the opinions of others.

The truth is: if you are in favor of applause, there are churches, individuals and articles whose opinions and philosophies agree with you. If you are opposed to applause, there are churches, individuals and articles whose opinions and philosophies agree with you.

Those in favor of applause would most likely cite spontaneity and informality of worship, active participation of all worshippers, joy of worship, and appreciation of God's gifts of time and talent.

Those opposed to applause would cite the clear differences between worship and performance – the idea that worship focuses on God, not on individuals and the concept that everything each individual does in worship is an offering of time and talent to God. That would include sermons, prayers, music, tithes and offerings, ushering, etc. As a general rule, applause does not accompany any of those gifts, except music.

As the recipient, individually, and as part of our music program, I must acknowledge a certain satisfaction in being appreciated. The fact is, however, that I have had the great joy and kindness of feeling appreciated in so many ways, during my nearly 43 years here.

So, although concepts and philosophies of worship should certainly figure, in an important way, in such a decision, permit me to put it on the lower level of practicality.

1. Some people want to applaud, some do not, which leads to a small division among worshippers.
2. Admittedly, some musical offerings definitely are more exciting than others, leading to applause that almost seems mandatory, because of previous times of applause. (This past Sunday's postlude would be an example of that. Also, some contemporary, upbeat anthems may be more exciting than some older compositions.)
3. There is the possibility of uncertainty and embarrassment if one soloist inspires applause, and another does not. Or one choir or singing group in a service inspires applause and another does not. The same could be true of two very different kinds of anthems in a service. There is no question that each of these circumstances can lead to an awkward situation.

This leads me to ask if we might not, at least, try refraining from applause for a time, because that has been the request of a number of worshippers.

I hasten to say that the opinions of one group of worshippers should not necessarily supersede the opinions of others. But I would also say that I, personally, will feel no less appreciated for my offerings and I am hoping that would be true of all our ringers and singers, as well.

Can we all, at least, seek to evaluate what each of these practices means to us ... and why we feel as we do?

Your understanding and thoughtful consideration are greatly appreciated and I welcome hearing thoughts from both sides going forward.

~ Sandra D. Minter

On behalf of the congregation, the Session would like to:

- express our sincere thanks to Mike Harless for keeping the facility not only super clean but also as virus-free as possible over the past eight months;
- thank the congregation and staff for following the guidelines established in Oct 2020;
- thank the members of our church, who continued faithfully to send in their weekly and monthly offerings, and donations to special causes;
- express our sincere thanks to Sandra Minter, Martha Carter and Daniel Pillow, who developed and launched new ways to include people in worship and other activities, such as Sunday School and daily Scripture readings;
- give thanks to God for keeping us safe - to our knowledge, we came through the pandemic without a single case of transmission attributed to our in-person worship experiences.

Based on the most recent guidance from the CDC and VDH, First Presbyterian Church has modified our original Guidelines document published October 2020. The new guidelines take effect as of midnight, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

- If you CURRENTLY have a fever or are exhibiting symptoms that could indicate that you could be infected with the virus, PLEASE do not enter our facilities. We invite you to join us by video or phone, instead.
- Cleaning procedures related to the sanctuary and other areas of high use that were enacted in October 2020 will continue, until further notice.
  - Hand sanitizer and face masks will continue to be available in the narthex.
  - We will continue to use upgraded air filters in the HVAC systems for the sanctuary.
- Masks are not required for anyone attending services or meetings at the church facilities.
  - If you have NOT been vaccinated, you are encouraged to wear a mask in our facilities for your own protection.
- Signs will be posted at entry points and in the narthex that explain our policies and guidelines.
- Ushers will continue to maintain a list of attendees at church services, and individuals hosting meetings will maintain a list of attendees in their meeting notes, in case contact tracing is required.
- All normal entry and exit points to the facilities will be open and available for use. (Some entry points may be locked during the week, as is normal.)
- Bibles and hymnals and offering envelopes will be available in the pews.
- Attendees are welcome to sit in any location in the sanctuary, and in any of the meeting rooms.
  - If you have NOT been vaccinated, you are encouraged to maintain 'social distancing' guidelines for your own protection.
- Singing and responsively reading is now encouraged and allowed in our building. Again, please be respectful of individuals who may be uncomfortable with singing.
- Child care will be provided on an as-needed basis.
  - If the church is notified in advance, child care will be arranged. Otherwise, members and visitors are welcome to bring their children to the sanctuary for worship services.
- Visitors are welcome and encouraged to attend. Ushers will ensure that visitors are aware of our policies and guidelines.
- Prior restrictions regarding Sunday morning worship services are now rescinded. The Worship & Music Committee will develop new guidelines regarding administering Communion, Passing of the Peace, and collection of offerings. In general, and until new guidelines have been developed, the following are in effect:
  - There are no longer any restrictions on the length of the service, the number of verses of hymns, or the availability of bulletins.
  - Communion will continue to be observed as with the prior restrictions, with ushers providing the elements to the congregation as they enter the sanctuary. (New guidelines are being developed.)
  - Passing of the Peace will return to our prior practice of encouraging attendees to meet and greet each other, including moving around in the sanctuary. Please be respectful of individuals who may still prefer NOT shaking hands or hugging, and who may want to maintain social distancing.
  - Offering plates will be located in the narthex, and individuals will be encouraged to mail their offerings or drop them in the plates as they enter or leave the sanctuary.
- Guidelines for the choirs will be developed by the Music Director, and will be no less restrictive than the guidelines noted above.

# First Presbyterian Church

Sunday Worship Will Be Held In-Person and on Our YouTube Channel  
Devotions with Daniel Continue to Be Streamed on Our YouTube Channel

June 2021						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	2 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	3 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	4 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	5 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a
6 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a  Social Time, 9:30a Sunday School, 9:45a  Worship, 11:00a	7 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	8 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a  W/M Comm. + Staff, 11a  M/S Comm., 4p	9 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a  Choirs Handbell, 5:30p Chancel, 7:30p	10 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a  VOUCHERS DUE, 10a	11 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	12 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a
13 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a  Social Time, 9:30a Sunday School 9:45a  Worship, 11:00a	14 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	15 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	16 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a  Choirs Handbell, 5:30p Chancel, 7:30p	17 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	18 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	19 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a
20 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a Social Time, 9:30a Sunday School 9:45a  Worship, 11:00a	21 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	22 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	23 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a  Choirs Handbell, 5:30p Chancel, 7:30p	24 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a  VOUCHERS DUE, 10a	25 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	26 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a
27 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a Social Time, 9:30a, Sunday School 9:45a  Worship, 11:00a	28 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a	29 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a  Newsletter Items Due, 10a	30 Devotions w/ Daniel, 8a  Choirs Handbell, 5:30p Chancel, 7:30p			

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