



The Spire

March 2022

Pastor's Page

I believe the Presbyterian Church USA has some rich gifts to give to the world. We are a church founded on the understanding that God is good, that God is for us, that God wills the good for each of us. Traditionally we call that “grace.” God is gracious. We believe that God’s goodness comes to us as God’s initiative, prior to our response, and therefore unearned. We believe that our actions are a response to God out of gratitude, not an attempt to merit God’s favor. We as Presbyterians are an open, welcoming, inclusive church. No one is rejected out of hand. Women and men, we believe, are gifted for service and leadership by God. The Presbyterian church has a rich history of standing up for justice, for human rights, for civil rights, for the protection of the needy and the vulnerable. We have a robust tradition of compassionate service to our communities. It would be impossible to count the number of soup kitchens, food pantries, tutoring programs, homeless shelters, abuse shelters, children’s programs, and countless other kinds of ministries Presbyterians have run or participated in. We have a form of government that is representative, giving a voice to the people. We have a connectional system that provides for support, encouragement, guidance and assistance to each other. We are far from perfect, but we can be thankful for the rich treasures the Presbyterian Church has given to the world.

But we have a problem. The world is changing faster than we are. Religious habits and trends have made the landscape we inhabit look different. It is as if an earthquake had rerouted the river running through our town, and the old landmarks were no longer where they used to be. The familiar is being replaced by the unfamiliar. It is no wonder that this makes people uncomfortable. Change is never easy. We like things the way we liked them in the past. That is only human. But if the earthquake really happened, there is no going back to how it used to be. History never bends to our will.

At our recent Presbytery meeting, we heard a synopsis of those changes presented by the Presbyterian Foundation’s Project Regeneration staff. They reported that the median membership of our Presbyterian congregations is now 67, meaning half are larger, and half are smaller. They told us that the median worship attendance is 35 (half have more, and half less). They said that the percentage of our members who are in worship has declined from 55% in 2013 to 43% in 2019 (and who knows what the percentage will be after the pandemic). They reported that 40% of our congregations have less than 50 members. Church analysts, they said, believe a church needs at least 80 members to be sustainable. Finally, they said that worship space utilization is averaging 30%.

But it doesn't have to happen. We do have growing, thriving Presbyterian congregations. Carol Clark, our Presbytery builder has made a study of them. But they are not healthy because they are doing everything as it has been done before. Rather, they are changing, adapting, and experimenting. There is often new music. There is often a less formal style. You see fewer robes and bulletins. You see young families with children. You see hope.

Some people would rather die than change. That is not us. We believe we have something — many things — the world needs. We have an inclusive message of God's love. We have ministries of mercy and compassion that our community needs. We have a mission here that is bigger than our personal preferences. It is, after all, God's mission, not ours. It is not that the church has a mission; rather that God's mission has a church. So let us be the church for the future, and not merely for the past.

Downtown Churches Lenten Services 2022

The Downtown church will resume our lenten services in each other's churches again this year. There will be no lunch served. The services begin at 12:15 pm.

Date	Host Church	Preacher
March 7	First United Methodist	Greg Pair
March 14	Immaculate Conception	Phil Blackburn
March 21	St. John's	Kim Cloninger
March 28	First Presbyterian	Bud Reeves
April 4	Goddard United Methodist	Steven Kurtz
April 11	Central Presbyterian	Tasha Blackburn

Deacon's Spotlight

We have had snow the beginning of the month and sleet and freezing rain the end of the month. Hopefully, we won't get any more of either this year.

We are looking forward to delivering Spring and Easter flowers to our shut-ins. We are also looking forward to being able to enjoy cooking and sharing a meal with our church family and visiting.

Respectfully,

Roberta Elliott

Central's Meal Share



Remember: if a meal is needed for a church member, contact Linda Riley at lriley@cox.net. If you are unable to reach Linda, you can call Debbie at the church office.

Kathya....

Please keep Kathya, her family and her country in your prayers.

Worship Service Videos

You can watch videos of our worship service live at 10:30 Sunday morning at our Youtube channel or watch the recording of the service anytime.

New COVID Masking Guidelines

Session has approved the recommendation from the Worship Committee that mask wearing at church will now be optional. Feel free to continue to wear a mask if you wish, or not. Distancing is still recommended.

Hospitalizations

During this time of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have discontinued hospital visitations for now.

Officers of Central Presbyterian Church After Forthcoming Installation

Session

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Sandy Barron	Debi Wilkinson	Cissy Rose
Mike McClure	Margaret Sparkman	John Spain
John Hale	Suzanne Bethell	Ruthie McRae

Deacons

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Renda Cook	Betty McSwain	Martin Hyatt
Jo Hardy	Larry Hall	Suzanne Spain
Linda Riley		Jackie Franklin
Robertta Elliot		Robert MacAfee

Trustees

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Ken Cowan	Carl Rose	Stanhope Wilkinson

March Birthdays

Ruthie McRae	03/01
Jackie Franklin	03/02
Ron Tabor	03/06
Sally Naucke	03/09
Miles Selby	03/09
Evelyn Rockford	03/13
Gary Simpson	03/13
Catherine Conway	03/17
Catherine Williams	03/17
Dave Kotarek	03/24
Becky Evans	03/27



Care Committee



Every 3rd Tuesday of the month, a group of caring individuals meet at Sweet Bay at 12:00 over lunch, we discuss visiting the shut-ins of our church. We team up and then go to visit those who aren't able to come to church. Please join this important mission of our church.

Central Presbyterian Organization/Committee Name- Fort Smith, AR
Minutes of Stated Session Meeting Feb. 15, 2021

The regular meeting of the session was called to order at 6:06pm by Pastor Steven. The devotional was given by John Hale on God's goodness, working behind the scenes.

Present

Pastor Kim, Pastor Steven, Margaret Sparkman, Suzanne Bethell, Cissy Rose, Mike McClure, Ruthie McRae and John Spain. Sandra Barron and John Hale by zoom and Debi Wilkinson was excused

The docket and minutes were approved, and a quorum was declared.

Clerk's Report : Thank you note from Presbyterian Mission and statistical report was completed with the help of Mike and Pat.

Pastor's Report: A summary of the pastor's activities is included with the session packet.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Building & Grounds: Getting more bids on repair to the New Vision Home. Cissy explained there is a need for some type of ice machine to replace old one since there is a wedding and rehearsal planned at the end of April. We could make do with smaller coffee makers. This will be looked in to.

Christian Education: No report.

Outreach: Ruthie replaced the broken window shades and purchased paper products for the New Vision Home. Hats, socks and underwear are an ongoing need. Glass recycling has started with donations taken to defray the expense.

Worship: Our masks will remain on during worship. May change at next meeting. Sunday service can be live streamed or on-line for later viewing.

Personnel: No report.

Stewardship: There was a short fall of \$7,751.81 for the Feb. P & L account. TPF holdings has a positive \$19,168.21, from January.

Visionary: No report.

New Business: Pastor Steven will be taking vacation Feb. 21-28. Chris McRae will preach on Feb. 27th. Pastor also applied for a coaching grant.

Next month's devotional will be given by Cissy Rose. The meeting was adjourned with prayer by Pastor Steven Kurtz at 6:45PM. Our next meeting will be held on April 19th.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Sparkman, Clerk of Session

Sweet House Help Needed

The programs at the Sweet House include meals on Friday and Saturday evenings, every other week. Help is needed in meal preparation, set up (served buffet style) and clean up. If you could help with any of those tasks on any schedule that suits you, please let us know. This is an opportunity for our congregation to be directly involved, to meet some of the participants, leaders and parents, and to show love in a practical way. Please let Debbie in the church office know if you can help.

Flower Calendars

The Flower Calendar (or both this year and next) have been returned to the bulletin board, across from the choir room on the east side of the building. Please help fill in the empty dates.

Food Court

While we no longer enjoy the sights and sounds of the food cart going down the center aisle, we still need to bring non-perishable food items every Sunday. The Clearinghouse has a need for food that is greater than

March 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 Loose Change Sunday 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	28 10:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR	1 10:30 AM PW General Meeting-P 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	2 7:00 PM Choir Practice	3 8:30 AM Merry Muffin Makers-FH/Kit. 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	4	5
6 Back Pack Sunday 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:00 PM Worship Committee-P 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	7 10:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR 6:00 PM Citizens Climate Lobby	8 10:00 AM Hannah Circle-Lib. 5:00 PM Esther Circle-Lib. 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	9 7:00 PM Choir Practice	10 11:00 AM Retired Teachers, FH 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 6:00 PM Pints with the Pastor, F.S. Brewing Co. 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	11	12 2:00 PM 2nd Sunday Supper
13 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:00 PM Building and Grounds Meeting 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	14 10:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR	15 12:00 PM Care Committee Meeting at Sweet Bay 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 6:00 PM Session Meeting-SR 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	16 5:30 PM Bridges 7:00 PM Choir Practice	17 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	18	19
20 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 11:00 AM Christian Education Committee 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	21 10:30 AM Book Club-Lib. 10:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR	22 12:30 PM Knitting Group-Lib. 6:00 PM Deacon's Meeting-SR 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	23 7:00 PM Choir Practice	24 6:00 PM Enneagram Meeting - SR 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	25	26
27 Loose Change Sunday 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	28 10:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR	29 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	30 7:00 PM Choir Practice	31 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	1	2