

Fellowship Presbyterian Church, ECO

Summer 2020



Hallelujah!

Sanctuary Worship Resumed!

On Sunday, June 14, we gathered for worship in our sanctuary for the first time since March! Everyone present was uplifted by this inspiring milestone!

That first sanctuary service was abbreviated in length but really helped those present to realize that the Power that motivates our worship is more enduring than any pandemic! Since that Sunday, the services have essentially returned to the pre-pandemic structure.

While the structure of and personal participation in worship have returned, we continue to practice both social distancing and mask wearing while in the sanctuary.

The Pastor's Corner - Summer 2020



Pastor Ben Laughlin

Our Hope is in Jesus Christ

Greetings from the mountains of North Georgia. I write to my sisters and brothers of Fellowship Presbyterian Church looking out the window of our RV at the mountains north of Dahlonega Georgia. It is good to be able to just "BE" sometimes. It has been hard to just "BE" since the advent of the Coronavirus this spring.

As I start my vacation, my plan is to rest and relax. It has been a long time since March 15 when COVID 19 became very real to us all. Our lives changed that weekend.

My main concern at the onset was to remind us all that our Hope is in Jesus. We never know for sure what tomorrow will bring. That is the way life presents itself. I have a passage marked in my Bible. It is Romans 5:1-5. Take a moment and read it now with me.

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into his grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance: perseverance, character: and character hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" God is the God of Hope. Romans 5:13 states: ***"May the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."***

As Christians, our future rests in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior in whom we trust. Throughout the Old Testament, God offered hope to his people through numerous prophecies of the coming deliverer. So certain was this truth that **"hope" and "trust"** are often interchangeable in the Bible. The New Testament reveals that these promises were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. I quote Nahum 1:7: ***"The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble."***

Trust means depending on someone or something to help us out in life, especially in a time of crisis or need. Learning to trust is the first step on the journey to Christian maturity. All our hope amid life's trials and tribulations is in Jesus Christ. Because God can be trusted, his word is also trustworthy, and we can depend on it. Jesus is God's word made flesh. Jesus is as close as hands and feet when we go to him in prayer. You can always depend on the Lord.

Our hope is rooted in the faithfulness and trustworthiness of God. Because of Christ's resurrection and return to his Father, Christians have Hope as they look forward to his return, to the resurrection of the body and to life with Christ that will never end. Remember, hope is an important part of the triad "faith, hope love."

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13

Always remember to "Social Distance" and be safe. I have found it easy to social distance in a campground. I highly recommend it to all!

Grace and peace and hope to all,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Ben Laughlin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Worship ...

WORSHIP THE LORD WITH GLADNESS

"Come let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song." Psalm 95:1-2.

We have now met for seven Sundays to worship in the Sanctuary. It has been an exciting time to be with our brothers and sisters, but it is even better that we get to worship God together again. Several Sundays ago we were able to celebrate Communion with the Lord. In many ways, it is almost like normal times, and someday soon, I pray, we will be able to worship without restrictions. In the mean time, we will continue to wear masks and do our socializing in the parking lot.

We are keeping up with the Governor's recommendations and those of the leading health associations. The church is cleaned meticulously each week. The door handles, tables, hand rails, the box for tithes and offerings, chairs, etc., are all sanitized for protection from the COVID-19 virus. Sanitizing lotion, extra masks, and gloves are available in the Narthex, and in each restroom.

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our worship time together. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact Dianne McMullen, our new Worship Elder.

Chuck Allen, Worship Chairman

Thinking about Chuck and Carolyn Allen:

There are so many ways both Chuck and Carolyn have helped us when we were first New Lebanon Presbyterian Church and later when we went to ECO in October 2013 as Fellowship Presbyterian Church.

They have both shared many leadership skills as teachers: Carolyn most recently in Presby Women group as Bible study leader and Chuck as a long term Sunday School and Disciple Bible Study teacher as well as starting a successful Men's Thursday Morning Community Bible Study group in Bent Tree.

Both have served as Elders: Carolyn served in 2016-2018, and Chuck is on his 9 ½ years of service as an Elder. Carolyn has been one of our organists for a number of years, and actually served as church secretary in her early years here as a member. Their other numerous endeavors expressing the love of Jesus Christ leave us with a tremendous legacy of caring.



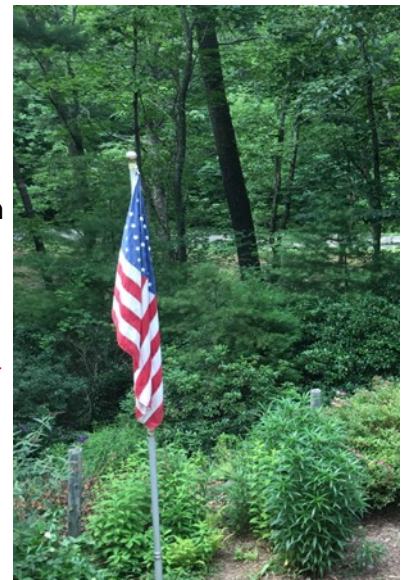
Chuck and Caroline Allen

**Please know that you will be missed!
So Very Much!**

(Dianne McMullen has been appointed by the Session to serve as interim Worship Elder for the remainder of 2020.)

Missions and Evangelism ...

Thank you to the congregation for your recent support and donations to the **Timothy House**. They were under much financial strain due to the reduction of grant money. This was caused by the extended shut down of the Thrift Store as well as the Timothy House resident's inability to work as often as they wished during the early months of the virus pandemic. Missions also provided some extra funds to purchase food and canned goods during this difficult time. *During a recent conversation with Pastor Bob Trowell, he indicated he was very thankful both to our church and others for their generous financial donations. He also said that although several residents needed to be quarantined and tested, fortunately none were found to test positive for the virus and all are healthy. Now that the Thrift Store is open 3 days per week, he feels confident that they will receive their grant money this coming September as usual.*



Our weekly **Bread delivery** was resumed beginning **July 10th**, after several months suspension during the virus emergency. We have been delivering bread again to all the agencies we have supported previously, but will continue to do so in a safe manner during this time, by maintaining social distancing, and wearing masks. (Please see article by Bob Pettee about this ministry on the following page.)

Shallow Wells is being highlighted during **July and August**. Please consider donating again this year to help provide clean water to those in need. Thanks to the congregation, FPC was able to provide enough funds last year for 6 new wells!

Promise Land – Our March highlight was postponed due to the virus situation. We now plan to highlight this agency in **August**. We will not be able to have a luncheon or speaker as originally planned, but we ask the congregation to please support the Promise Land with donated items or monetary donations. *Like most of the agencies we support, this was a difficult time period. Promise Land residents were also fortunate in avoiding the virus. This was a real concern for Promise Land as the men live in a very “tight quarters” situation. A few months ago Promise Land needed a cooking stove and then during this pandemic their refrigerator also quit working and we were able to help them locate a nice inexpensive used one, for which they were very appreciative. Bill Manning, the director said they currently have a project to paint a house for someone, which will help in providing funds.*

For the August highlight, a list of needed items will be posted in the church later this month. Promise Land desperately needs as much support as possible to upgrade their facility. If you would like to provide a monetary donation, please write Promise Land in the Memo section of your check.

Evangelism . . .

We continue the **One Cross to One Person** program. Crosses were made available for anyone to pick up outside during the time period our church was closed. Twenty five crosses with verses were donated during this time for anyone in need of prayer, hope, encouragement and love. As always, crosses are still available inside the church, or you can request them from the Missions/Evangelism committee if you prefer.

Dave Snider, Missions Elder

Galatians 6:2 “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

Thinking about Dave and Carol Snider:



Dave and Carol
Snider

Thanks to both of them in sharing their talents and abilities with us – Carol, for being willing to serve the Session as clerk for three years; Dave being Elder of Missions for two years.

For their loyalty and willingness to work on many mission tasks such as *The Pastor's Pot*, and the *Bread Ministry* as well as being willing to take on many Saturday stints as cashier and bagger on Presbyterian Day at the *Thrift Store* in Jasper.

Their caring hands and commitment to help out wherever and whenever needed will be sorely missed!

May God Bless them in their new endeavors!

(The Session has appointed Bob Pettee to serve as interim Mission and Evangelism Elder for the remainder of 2020.)



Bread Ministry - 2 Hours a Month

Giving to the needy—in Matthew 6, this is what our Lord said about it—

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing – so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

We have certainly followed God’s instructions by keeping it a secret that we touch the lives of over 300 of the area’s neediest people. We have been so secretive that even some fellow church members are unaware of this church mission activity. Every Friday we deliver baked goods to various agencies in our area, giving us an insight into their needs. That allows us to highlight an agency for a month and provide for their more specific needs.

But we need your help to continue this valuable work because we have only a handful of volunteers that are regulars making these deliveries. Please contact me to arrange for you to ride along with one of the volunteers on their Friday rounds. Your basic commitment is only two hours a month and your reward will be seen in heaven.

Bob Pettee, Interim Missions and Evangelism Elder

Church During Pandemic is Different!

Even the choir practices social distancing! Singing without being grouped in vocal sections requires more effort and practice.



Recording Video and Audio to allow the service to be put on the Internet takes a lot of work both before and after the worship time!



The congregation wears masks even when singing!



And when leaving the service!



Corinthians Sunday School Class even meets *al fresco*!



Congratulations To Our Graduate!

Ryan Clements - Class of 2020!!!

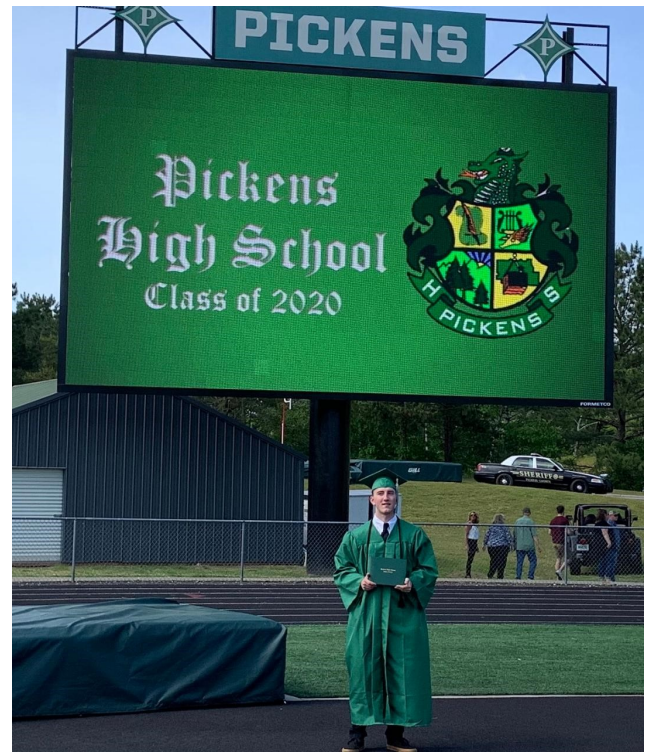
Ryan's high school career included running track all four years. He played trombone in the PHS Marching Band all four years. And, he was a club member of FCA all four years.

Ryan has been active here at Fellowship, too. He attended Fellowship before he was born! He has been here all his life and was confirmed in 2017. He's been a regular acolyte for seven years and a vital part of our Youth Program, too. He played the Old Man, Harry Stephens, a role he came up with in our first play "Message from Jesus", written by all of our youth. Last year in our play "Relay", the prequel to "Message from Jesus", Ryan played the young Harry and took us back to the 50's to see the story of how Harry came to Christ.

This Fall, Ryan will start his next adventure by attending Chattahoochee Tech here in Jasper to begin studying automotive technology. His plan is to graduate with a degree in Motor Sports Engineering and his dream is to become a crew chief for a race car team.

Ryan loves relaxing in the great outdoors and hiking with his dad when he's not working at the Starbuck's inside Ingles. Stop by and say hello.

**Your church family loves you, Ryan,
Congratulations.
We are so proud of you.**



Youth Lead Sunday Service 2020

Youth Sunday, originally set for April, had to be postponed until July 12. The teens used the delay to hone their writing, speaking, and singing skills until they were given the go-ahead for their annual opportunity to guide our worship service.

From the call to worship, to the prayers, the offertory music, and the children's sermon, the youth reflected on the central theme of *Heroes*.

Ryan, Brent, Priscilla, and Rose each took turns, during the sermon time, to speak from their hearts about what God has meant in their lives. It can be difficult for teenagers (and adults) to express what's really going on in their hearts and minds. Each of these four became some of our own heroes for their willingness to discuss openly times that God intervened to meet their needs.



Rose Finney



Priscilla Dunaway



Ryan Clements



Brent Voyles

Youth Hike

Our fearless leader, Connie Nelson, led the Youth on a hike from Big Stump to Eagle's Rest, our destination.

Our purpose, besides getting teenagers to move, sweat and breathe deeply, was to hear their Youth Sunday sermons for the first time. All four of them, Brent, Priscilla, Rose and Ryan, bared their souls and told personal stories about how God had comforted them, protected them and used them for their good and His glory. A day we will all long remember.



Youth to Support Military

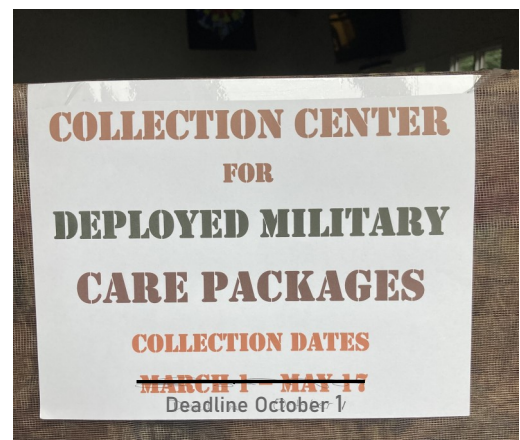
In February, the Youth Group spent an engrossing evening with Mr. Paul Corkill, listening to his reminiscences about his service in World War II. They were fascinated to hear history come to life as he spoke! His descriptions of training for bomber service and the missions he flew were only half of the picture of his wartime experience. The photos he shared of his tent in Italy and his stories about interacting with the Italian citizens were particularly memorable. Their gratitude for a simple cake of soap, which they could not get themselves, seems particularly relevant in hindsight after our own experiences of the past few months!

Paul's talk was also a great motivating run-up to our announcement of our Military Care Package project just before the coronavirus put everyone into limbo. Since we've all been staying home more and seeing less of our friends and family face-to-face, we have a better sense of the isolation our deployed troops can feel. We have now rescheduled the end date for donations to October 1, 2020, in order to hopefully have the packages delivered by Veterans' Day. We hope everyone will continue to support this project! **We still have lists of suggested items attached to the donation box in the Narthex**, or you can contact someone in the Youth Group for ideas.

-Wendy Finney, Connie Kirk, Connie Nelson, & Linda Head



Paul Corkill shares WWII military experiences with the youth group.



You can find the collection box in the Narthex

ECO Retreat for Youth

Our Youth Group has had much to overcome this year. Our mission trip to Wilmington, NC was canceled in June due to the corona virus but rescheduled for July in Nashville, TN. That one, too, was cancelled and after much prayer and persistence we have recently received ALL of our money back!!!

So, the weekend of August 21 – 23, our Fellowship Presbyterian Youth Group will be attending the “Together Conference 2020” at Camp Woodlands in Cleveland, GA.

This retreat is for students from the Presbytery of the South to worship and grow together. The topic will be “Gospel Identity” and how to practically live out Gospel truths in our everyday lives. Rev. Dr. Dana Allin, our ECO Synod Executive, will be the speaker. Don’t let his title scare you. His heart is for our younger generation and he is a dynamic speaker.

Please pray for our youth and their leaders as they seek a transformative adventure in the name of Jesus.

– **Connie Kirk**



Camp Woodlands in Cleveland, GA

BUILDING AND GROUNDS...

News from Building and Grounds During the Coronavirus

- The large tree near the playground was removed and so were several large limbs near the Memorial Gardens and the corner of the Sanctuary.
- The mower has been repaired to replace battery, tune up, oil change and blade sharpening.
- Arturo Barron Mowing Service has been engaged to mow and cleanup the grass.
- The wooden benches in the Memorial Gardens are being replaced by new ones. They will be paid for with money from the Memorial Gardens Fund.
- Two new stone stands are on order for the Memorial Garden. The present two are nearly full. They will be paid for with money from the Memorial Gardens Fund.
- The grounds will be maintained during this time of crisis to provide a beautiful appearance to the thousands who pass by our church during each month.

Gene Berry, B&G Elder

Congregational Care...

4 Beautiful Ways “Footprints in the Sand” Offers Solid Hope

(taken from crosswalk.com article 4/16/2020 the ESV is used for scripture reference)

The poem “Footprints in the Sand” is frequently framed for display in living rooms and bedrooms. You can buy a keychain, tea towels and decorative plates featuring this well-known piece of writing. It’s not scripture, but “Footprints in the Sand” does offer hope for the reader who recognizes God’s promises between the lines.

Scripture Related to “Footprints in the Sand”

“Footprints in the Sand” seems to draw much of its inspiration from the Psalms where the writer remarks **“The steps of a man are established by the Lord when he delights in His way, though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong for the Lord upholds his hand.”** (Psalm 37:23-24)

In Psalm 77:19 - the writer remarks that God’s footsteps **“were unseen.”** Psalm 119:133 - begs God to **“steady my steps according to your promise and let no iniquities get dominion over me.”**

In the New Testament, such as (1 Peter 2:2), the Christian is exhorted to follow in Jesus’ footsteps. (Romans 4:12) says God **“is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.”**

The Promise of “Footprints in the Sand”

The modern Christian reading this poem can easily apply it to the challenges of daily life. In the fourth stanza, the Father says “My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never leave you.”

This is what the Lord has promised in (Deuteronomy 31:6) **“The Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”** What was true of God then is true today—He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

By the blood of His Son Jesus Christ, God has fulfilled His promise to be with us all the time and keeps that promise by not only being omnipresent, but by giving the Christian a helper in the form of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

“Footprints” connects direction, identity, and example with the promises of God. He will protect. He will also equip His people to follow. Paul prayed that God would **“equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ.”** (Hebrews 13:20-21)

Pam Coble, Congregational Care Elder

