

Thursday, January 14, 2021

SMPC Now

OUR JOURNEY THROUGH A TRYING TIME

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. - Philippians 4:8

Breathless may refer to someone who is winded, in distress, or suddenly frightened. On the other hand, breathless can describe the loquacious soul with a talent for gab who has never quite learned the value of a period(.) Referring to someone prattling on, George Bernard Shaw observed, "the problem with [them] is that they lack the power of conversation but not the power of speech." According to Buddha, "A dog is not considered a good dog because he is a good barker. A man is not considered a good man because he is a good talker." Perhaps that is why I eventually stopped turning on the television when getting ready in the morning.

Earlier this week, the TV happened to be on in another room, and while I couldn't quite make out what the reporter, or expert, or guest was saying, I could tell that she was totally fired up about it, and had no room for commas or semicolons, much less periods. It began to sound like a table saw struggling get through a tungsten pipe. While I have no idea what the subject was, I was fairly confident that she had ceased saying anything noteworthy or substantial long before she was interrupted by the next commercial break. There is a point where thoughtful reflection cannot keep up with the compulsion to speak, and so the more that voices feel the need to swallow the silence, the less likely there is anything worth hearing.

Remember the deathly *no man's land* between the trenches of WWI? It seems that is where we find ourselves in these perilous, politically charged and medically anxious days, caught in the crossfire of inflammatory speech and the machine gun torrent of loaded words. Perhaps that is what Amos sensed when he warned Israel, "Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time; for it is an evil time."

Of course, more silence would be welcome, but that alone will not get us out of the crossfire. Therefore, may we think before we speak, post, utter, imply, or press send, remembering always that love does not tear down, but builds up. "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." If what we are about to say doesn't pass the test of Philippians 4:8, most likely, silence would be preferable.

Grace and Peace,
Matt



From the Session of South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church

Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' " - Matthew 22:37-40

Dear SMPC Family,

As a session, we have a duty to foster and strengthen the faith and life of our congregation through our leadership and service. As we serve in this capacity, it is incumbent upon us to ask ourselves what God wants us to accomplish as a session and how God is calling us to lead the congregation.

In 2014, the 221st General Assembly of our denomination, the Presbyterian Church USA, received a majority vote from the presbyteries to amend the *Book of Order*, our governing guidelines, to say "marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman, to love and support each other for the rest of their lives." This amendment gave pastors discretion in officiating weddings for committed couples whether they were man and woman or of the same sex, and also provided local church sessions with the flexibility to host weddings ceremonies without gender restrictions.

In the last few years, the session at SMPC has spent a substantial amount of time considering our current wedding policy. We have read and discussed books, we have studied scripture, we have discussed the potential changes on multiple occasions, and we have prayed about this matter individually and collectively. The session has put much time and thought into discerning the way that God is leading our congregation.

SMPC has always prided itself on being a welcoming congregation. The Christian faith, guided by the teachings and example of our Lord, Jesus Christ, is founded on the principle of the inclusion of all people. We are all children of God and as such we strive to be a community that embraces all members of our church family. Our congregation is strengthened by the differences among us and we want every member to know they are valued and loved.

At the conclusion of our studies and discussions, the session has felt called to change the current wedding policy to be a more inclusive policy, removing gender specific language, and to match the guidelines of our congregation as a whole. This change to the policy is an important step to make every member of our church feel welcome and accepted.

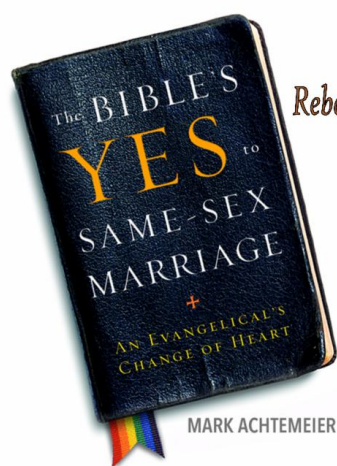
As our congregation continues to move forward, let us recall Jesus' commandment to "Love your neighbor as yourself," which is second only to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all you mind." With this guidance in mind, the session has voted to make these appropriate changes in order to welcome and include all our congregants as well as our neighbors.

Yours in Christ,

Mary Elledge
Clerk of Session, South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church

Some of us may be struggling with this concept-the Biblical basis for same sex marriage, the sudden change, or lacking the language to express our beliefs. As part of the Session's process in making this decision, we read *The Bible's Yes to Same Sex Marriage* by Mark Achtemier.

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation and Rev. Jessica Tidwell-Weinzierl, Director of Youth Ministry, will offer a four-week study of this book for all who are interested beginning January 25. *Please see details, below.*



*a four-week book study with
Rebecca Guzman & Rev. Jessica Tidwell-Weinzierl*

**Mondays,
January 25 - February 15**
6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Zoom

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER.

The following pages chronicle the journey with the Bible that took me from a personal stance of judgment and exclusion to a changed heart that longs for the day when the church will fully celebrate and participate in God's blessing of same-gender relationships.

So begins this book by Mark Achtemier. Rebecca and Jessica will co-lead this study open to high school age youth-adults that will meet for four weeks on Mondays, 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m., January 25- February 15 via zoom. Click the image above to sign up.

FROM THE FINANCE OFFICE

Year-end contributions statements will be **EMAILED on Tuesday, January 19.**

If you don't see your emailed statement, or if you would prefer a printed copy be mailed to you, please email Mary Katheryne Zagora, mkzagora@smpchome.org.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION MINISTRY

Children!

*Be sure to check your email on Saturday mornings
for resources for parents to use with children on
Sunday mornings!*

Children's Worship Supplies for Sunday, January 17:

Paper

Pencil

Crayons

Plastic Easter Eggs

**Small items to put inside eggs that will make noise
(i.e. coins, bell, shells, etc.)**

YOUTH MINISTRY



Sunday, January 17

*Listen in on Sunday, January 17
to hear two of our youth, Katie and Elizabeth,
share a Faith5 devotion!*

CLICK THE IMAGE TO LISTEN

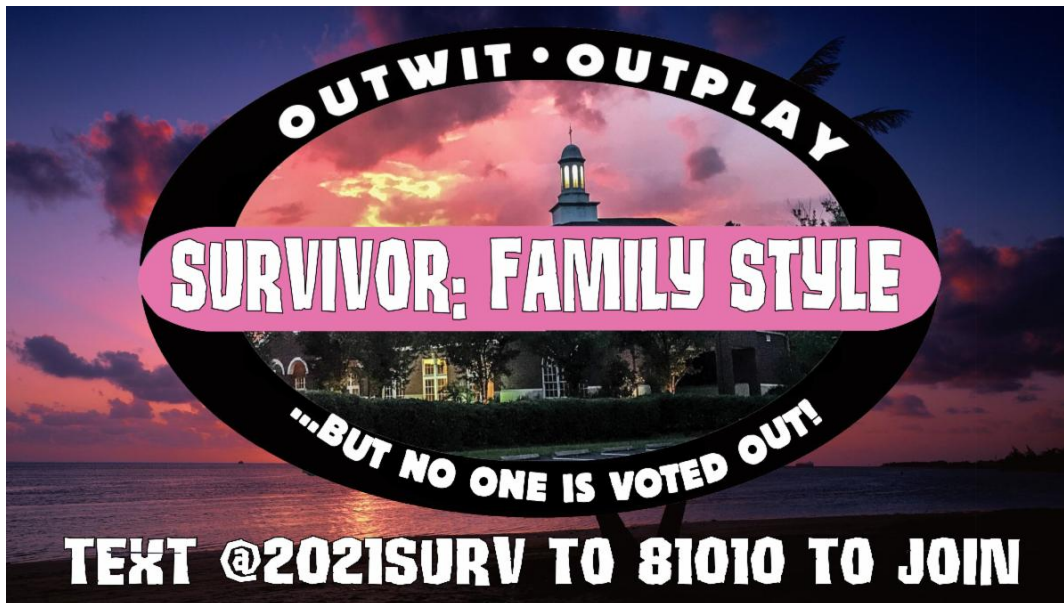
Youth Blanket Drive for Crisis Assistance Ministry



**Accepting new or like new comforters, sheets, blankets, or sleeping bags on
Sunday, January 24, 3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.**

We will have a contact-free drop-off zone.

Please put items in your trunk or back of your car for youth to collect!



CLICK ABOVE FOR DETAILS!

MISSIONS-OUTREACH MINISTRY



SMPC's Missions-Outreach Ministry is pleased to announce a new partnership with Habitat for Humanity.

Numerous volunteer opportunities for individuals, small groups, and families are available - build a home, build a playhouse, earn some service hours!

Contact Kyle Smith, 980.288.0047 or ksmith@helenadamsrealty.com for more details."

SMALL GROUPS AND MEETUPS

Rain or Shine Moms' Group

RESUMES

Thursday, January 14, 7:30 p.m., Zoom



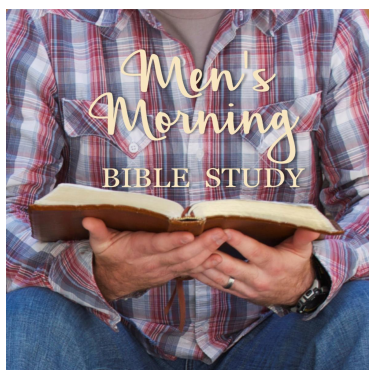
Are you looking for a group of women to journey with through parenthood? Are you free Thursday evenings? If so, please consider joining the Rain or Shine Moms' Group! We meet twice a month on Thursday evenings and share Bible study, joys, challenges, and everything in between.

Contact Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org, to be added to the email list.



Our Rain or Shine Moms' Group read the entire Bible in 2020!

In December of 2019, while baking cookies for Urban Ministry, we decided to commit to reading the Bible in 2020. It must have been the Holy Spirit's prompting, because we could never have known what a touchstone our reading would become in such a tumultuous time. This photo is from our last meeting of 2020, although we're missing a couple of members. Since we've now completed this project, January is a great time to join our group! Contact me, above, to be added to the list. Our next meeting is Thursday, January 14, and we will start making our plans for what to study next. - Rebecca Guzman



Men's Morning Bible Study

Fridays, 6:45 a.m. - 7:45 a.m., Zoom

Start your morning with fellowship and Bible study. There is always great discussion around readings and current events. The next study will be selected during the January 15 meeting.

Contact Aarik Eberhardt, aarikerberhardt@gmail.com for the Zoom link.



Coffee Grounds Online

Sunday, January 17

11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Zoom

After streaming our worship service live, join in on Zoom to see familiar faces and perhaps meet someone new.

Contact Nancy Metzler, nancy@smpchome.org for the Zoom ID#.

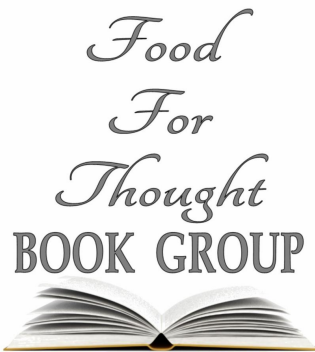


Dr. Matt Brown's Bible Study

Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m., Zoom

An exploration of the scripture for the coming week's sermon.

Contact Matt Brown, matt@smpchome.org for the Zoom link.



Food for Thought Book Group

Thursday, February 4, 7:00 p.m., Zoom

Theme: Black History Month

Book: *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead (NF)

As the Civil Rights movement begins to reach the black enclave of Frenchtown in segregated Tallahassee, Elwood Curtis takes the words of Dr. Martin Luther King to heart: He is "as good as anyone."

Contact Kathy Pacquette, khesspacquette@aol.com to receive the Zoom link.

If your SMPC Small Group or MeetUp would like to host a ZOOM online meeting, or a socially-distanced gathering on SMPC's campus, please contact Nancy Metzler, Director of Hospitality & Connection.

Also, if you are interested in formally joining the SMPC family, Nancy would love to speak with you!



Nancy Metzler
 Director of Hospitality
 & Connection
nancy@smpchome.org

STAYING CONNECTED***SMPC STAFF EMAILS:***

Once again, fraudulent emails are circulating with the sender posing as Dr. Matt Brown.

Please know that the pastors and staff of SMPC will never contact you by email asking for "favors" or your personal information.

To stay safe, always make sure that emails claiming to be from SMPC staff have the "@smpchome.org" address after the name before opening. Thank you!





If you have ROKU, Apple TV, or Amazon Fire TV, you will now find SMPC among the offerings on the BOXCAST channel.

- ◆ Initialize your streaming service.
(ROKU, Apple TV, or Amazon Fire TV)
- ◆ Find BOXCAST in your Channel Store, adding it to your channels.
- ◆ Open the BOXCAST channel, and search for *South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church*.
- ◆ You may watch live or choose past worship services.
- ◆ Using your remote, choose SMPC as a "favorite".



South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church

8601 Bryant Farms Road • Charlotte, North Carolina 28277 • 704.544.0404

www.SMPChome.org



South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church | 8601 Bryant Farms Rd. | Charlotte | NC | 28277