

Second Life

The Newsletter of Second Presbyterian Church

April 2024

April Brings a Focus on Fellowship

Gather with us at your Second home for three unique events

A Feast of Words: When Food, Poetry, and Books Collide

Sunday, April 14, noon, SPC fellowship hall



For years members of our congregation helped children at the former Park Place Child Life Center improve their reading abilities. April is National Poetry Month, and April 7-13 is National Library Week. In honor of both, a special fellowship time is set for April 14.

Please bring a food—any kind of food or dish—and link it to a poem or book that’s meaningful to you. We’ll include a little card next to the food, noting the

book or poem and perhaps why you chose it.

You may like the children’s book “James and the Giant Peach,” and so you might bring a dish made with peaches. Or perhaps you read the book “The Help” and have been eager to share chocolate pie. Maybe you feel inspired by “Stone Soup” and want to share soup. Or you liked Tracy Chevalier’s “Girl with a Pearl Earring” and would share Dutch cheese in honor of that.

Perhaps you like the book of Judges in the Bible and want to share honey out of appreciation for one of Samson’s experiences. Or you might bring a food in honor of poems like Wallace Stevens’ “The Emperor of Ice Cream” or D.H. Lawrence’s “Figs.”

We hope you’ll take part in this unique and tasty reception. And if you’re uninspired, bring a food and name it whatever you wish, e.g., Holden Caulfield’s never-before-articulated dream food.

Eating Like St. Francis: A Post-Worship Reception

Sunday, April 28, noon, SPC fellowship hall



On a Sunday when we recognize the appreciation Francis had for creation, during a sermon series that focuses more than usual on life in Italy, today we pause after worship and “eat like St. Francis.”

Join us during fellowship hour for unusual Francis-themed foods, including his favorite cookies. Because of his connection to Italy, please come ready for pizza, in particular.



Walking the Path of Hope: Counseling, Mental Health, and Faith

Wednesday, April 24, 6-7:15 p.m.

SPC fellowship hall

Dinner and panel discussion with Karen McKinley, Joy Himmel, and Lisa Dubey

April is National Counseling Awareness Month. The last five years have seen a marked increase in the need to address mental health. At SPC we support our mission partner upstairs—Tidewater Pastoral Counseling Services—but a few of our own people, including Lisa, Joy, and Karen, also work with clients every day.

This evening, we’ll hear them respond to a variety of questions, including your own. What challenges do they face, how do they see counseling as having changed, do they have strategies for managing burnout, what should people of faith and caring be aware of in terms of mental health, and how their faith and counseling intersect are some of the areas we will explore together. Join us for this important panel discussion.

Four Encounters with Francis

Part I: Mickey Rourke

In the 1980s, actor Mickey Rourke portrayed intense roles in movies such as “Rumble Fish,” “Barfly,” “Angel Heart,” and “9½ Weeks.” These roles, which added to his ruffled, slightly dirty, rebel persona, led to his selection in 1989 to play the role of St. Francis of Assisi in the film “Francesco.” Rourke played opposite Helena Bonham Carter, who portrayed the woman who later would become known as St. Clare.



That was the first time I was curious about Francis.

What I didn’t know then was that Francis had been raised in wealth, was lascivious in his youth, and was nicknamed “dominus” by his raucous friends who knew him as the king of partying, indulging in food, wine, and women. When I learned all that, Rourke’s casting in the role began to make more sense.

As a child, the saint we know as Francis was originally named John, after John the Baptist. But when his father returned from business travels in France, he renamed his son after the country that had brought him riches. Francis grew up enamored with wealth and revelry, as well as with Arthurian legends, aspiring to be a warrior; he even spent a year as a prisoner of war in a Perigean dungeon.

Part II: Those Animals and Birds

My second memory of Francis involves seeing small statues of him in gardens, holding birds in his hands with animals at his feet. At the time, I wasn’t aware that the statue represented an actual person. Tradition says that Francis was so zealous for God that he preached even when only animals were around to listen. As a result, he was called “God’s fool,” a name that didn’t bother him in the least.

His love for all creatures and the environment stands out, with many churches—including SPC—having a blessing of animals on or near the feast day of Francis, October 4. Rev. Catherine has blessed dogs, cats, and even a hermit crab. Francis emphasized the sacredness of all creation, including animals and our world.

The glories of creation are praised in the “Canticle of the Sun” that Francis wrote. Interestingly, this poem—the first we know to have been written in Italian—was written after Francis had gone blind and could no longer physically see the wonders of creation.

Part III: So Many Other Things: Creche, Stigmata, Prayer, and Evangelism

And then I learned that Francis was credited with creating the first nativity scene in 1223 in Greccio, Italy, as a visual representation of Christ’s poverty and simplicity. Additionally, he was the first recorded recipient of stigmata, bearing wounds resembling those of Christ on his hands and feet.

Moreover, I learned that one of my favorite prayers—which begins “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace”—is known as the Prayer of St. Francis, inspired by him. Each of those was so striking to me, but then I also learned that during the Fifth Crusade, Francis journeyed to Egypt to convert the Sultan Malik al-Kamil. Though the Sultan did not convert, he and Francis forged a strong friendship, and 10 years later, al-Kamil voluntarily surrendered Jerusalem to the Christians.

Part IV: A Former Argentinian Bouncer

In 2013, when Father Jorge Mario Bergoglio—formerly an Argentinian bouncer, janitor, and chemist—was elected Pope, he chose “Francis” as his papal name in homage to St. Francis of Assisi, becoming the first pope to adopt the name. On the first Maundy Thursday following his election, he washed and kissed the feet of 10 male and two female juvenile offenders who were incarcerated at Rome’s Casal del Marm detention facility, signifying his commitment to serving them.

In his first Easter sermon, Pope Francis said that “we ask the risen Jesus, who turns death into life, to change hatred into love, vengeance into forgiveness, war into peace.” Almost immediately, his humility and concern for the poor, marginalized, and imprisoned brought me to look more at the life of his namesake.

Epilogue

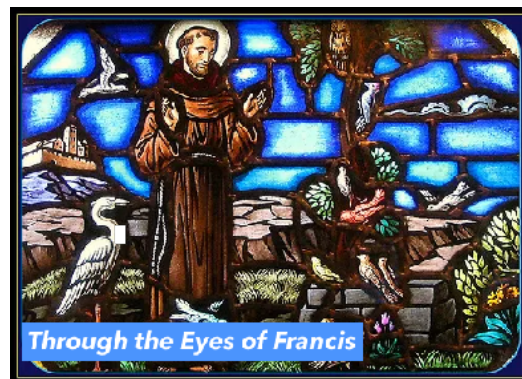
Frequently our faith is strengthened by seeing the lives, struggles, choices, and faith of fellow Christians. My hope is that you, like me, have grown so much through the family at Second. This spring I pray that spending time with Francis will enrich our faith journeys and prompt us to reflect more deeply at how our faith should shape our daily lives.

With blessings and love,
Pastor Craig

Sermon Series April 7-May 12

Through the Eyes of Francis

Having given up family wealth, Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) became known for his poverty, for having started a religious order, for speaking to birds and animals, for having created the live nativity scene, for being the patron saint of both the environment and of Italy, for his hymn “All Creatures of Our God and King,” and for the prayer attributed to him that starts with the words “Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.” Perhaps no religious figure outside of the Bible has shaped faith more than Francis. In this series, we look at our possessions, our heart, our purpose, creation, and death through the Bible and the faith of this remarkable individual.



April 7 **“The Treasure of Sublime Poverty”: A Look at Our Possessions** (Matt. 10:5-21)

April 14 **“Blessed Are the Meek, the Merciful”: A Look at Our Heart** (Matt. 5:1-16)

April 21 **“Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace”: A Look at Our Purpose** (Matt. 5:9, 21-26)

April 28 **“All Creatures of Our God and King”: A Look at Creation** (Job 12:7-10; Psalm 145:10-11; Psalm 148)

May 5 **“Our Walking Is Our Preaching”: A Look at Our Actions** (Psalm 51)

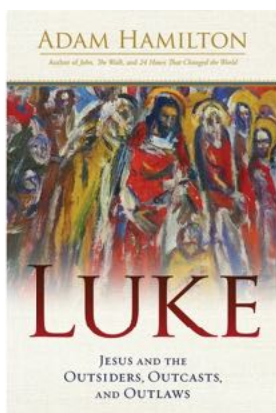
May 12 **“The Second Death Shall Do No Harm”: Our Relationship to Death** (Psalm 142)

Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws: A Video and Discussion Bible Study

*A Sunday morning study for adults, 9:45-10:35 a.m.
SPC fellowship hall*

In the video and Bible study “Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws,” Adam Hamilton focuses on the life of Jesus—

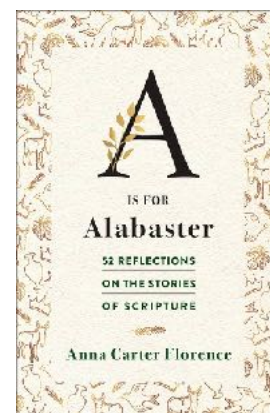
specifically the way he interacted with others—as told in the Gospel of Luke. Luke's stories depict unusual interactions of Jesus with others and offer hope and inspiration for our lives today. Join us as we dig deeper into the Gospel of Luke.



A is for Alabaster: 52 Reflections on the Stories of Scripture

*Wednesday fellowship & study
Noon to 12:55 p.m.
SPC fellowship hall
(Please bring a sack lunch.)*

Take an hour out of your week, bring a bag lunch, and gather with us at noon every Wednesday in the fellowship hall for a meal, conversation, and Bible study. Our focus now is on the Bible through the lens of Anna Carter Florence's book, “A is for Alabaster: 52 Reflections on the Stories of Scripture.”



From the Director of Music

Singing God's Peace and Grace into Being

Our recent journey through Lent and its exploration of the seven deadly sins has been a stark reminder that we live our faith against a backdrop of grim realities: the horrors of war, the painful cost of pride and dehumanization of others, the brokenness between nations, parties, neighbors, families, and friends. It becomes difficult to imagine the world as the beautiful creation God must have had in mind.

*What if instead of more violence
We let our weapons fall silent?
No more revenge or retribution
No more war or persecution.*

It could be beautiful.

These are the opening lines of a choral work by composer Kyle Pederson titled, "Can We Sing the Darkness to Light?" Our choir is currently preparing this work for an upcoming worship service, and I have appreciated the hopeful vision of this piece since I first encountered it a few years ago. In this context, "sing" is not an act of music making, but of healing and illumination: ... *sing the darkness to light.*" Singing together is a powerful act of hope and optimism. Whether in a congregation, a choir, or even a family singing in a car, to sing together is to bring unity and optimism powerfully to life.

*What if instead of our judgment
We soften our hearts that have hardened?
Instead of certainty and pride
We love and sacrifice.*

It could be beautiful.

As we approach the months that follow Easter and enter into a worship series that considers the story of St. Francis, we will encounter facets of what it means to be peacemakers. It will be an opportunity to think about how our own actions and attitudes might work as agents of hope and healing in the places where our influence is felt.

*Can we see the other as our brother?
Can we sing the darkness to light?
Sounding chords of compassion and grace
Set the swords of judgment aside
Let mercy's eyes
See the other human face.*

I wonder what a world of such vision and mercy might look and feel like in our homes. In our offices and conference rooms. In our school board meetings. In our political discourse. In our leadership, and in disputes between nations and cultures.

I realize, of course, this seems naïve in the face of the world's realities. But if there is any small chance that we can help to bring about healing and hopefulness, even in our own small circles, then it can only begin with a belief in a vision for a world better than the one we see around us. A belief in a world that reflects God's grace.

Can you envision what such a world could look like? Can we together sing chords of compassion and grace?

It could be beautiful.



Peace,
Bob

Missions and Outreach: Ways You Can Serve

What happened after Easter? After the resurrection of Christ, all four Gospels tell how Jesus appeared to his disciples and many others, and then Jesus ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us. As recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, Jesus' last words to his followers was for them to go out into the world to share the Good News.

Every Christian today is a legacy of Christ's followers sharing that Good News from one generation to the next. That means it falls to us—in this generation—to continue the work and to fulfill what theologians call "the Great Commission." How do we, as the body of believers gathered at Second Presbyterian Church in Norfolk, do that? And how can you be a part of it?

You can share your faith with friends and neighbors in order to point them to Jesus Christ. You can pray for others who are sharing their faith. You can financially support those who have been sent. You can join with those who, through word and deed, share the Gospel and love of Jesus in practical ways in our community.

One of the ministries Second supports, both financially and practically, is St. Columba Ecumenical Ministries. Originally founded as St. Columba Presbyterian Church's outreach to the former Robin Hood Apartments off Military Highway, St. Columba now serves those in desperate need in our community by providing clothing, food, healthcare assistance, and emergency shelter, as well as assistance to those in a housing crisis. Local churches and organizations from around Hampton Roads cooperate to support St. Columba.



SPC congregants have long supported the food pantry at St. Columba Ecumenical Ministries.

Many of you have generously donated food for the food pantry. Others volunteer their time by working at the Day Center to provide a safe place for clients to shower and have lunch. In doing so, we are showing God's love to those in need. If you would like to learn more about St. Columba—and help support its annual fundraising appeal—please talk with Alice Allen-Grimes about attending the St. Columba Silent Auction and Benefit Dinner, set for 5 p.m. Saturday, April 20, at Bayside Presbyterian Church, Virginia Beach.



Volunteers from SPC help with LAUNCH.

Here are a few other ways you can be of service:

- Attend YOURS' Youth of Excellence Award Banquet, at 6:30 p.m. Friday, April 19, at First Presbyterian Church, Norfolk. The event honors high school seniors graduating from the YOURS Ministry program. Contact Larry Hull.
- Help out with LAUNCH (Learning Access Unity Nutrition Career Health). While grant funding is declining, LAUNCH is planning for the Bridge six-week summer camp, and monthly food distribution is ongoing. Volunteers are needed. Contact Joe Morgan.
- Pray for Jake and Anna Kerr, who are still on home leave, meeting with churches and their supporters. Please pray God would give them wisdom as they consider the timing of their return to the Middle East. The area they serve is close to several of the ongoing conflicts, and security is a concern.
- Pray for Jenn West's theological studies and opportunities for her to share.



An Evening at Bold Mariner Brewing Company

Wednesday, April 10, 5:45-7:15 p.m., 1901 East Ocean View Ave., Norfolk
Snacks provided; and barbecue and drinks available for purchase

Join us at the Bold Mariner Brewing Company, a brewery owned by SPC member Kerrie Stacks, and her husband, Michael. We'll meet in the side room, where we will talk, have some light snacks, try new beverages, enjoy each other, and even reflect on fellowship and faith.



Eccentrics Classes Paused for Two Weeks

No classes in mid April

Essentrics exercise classes, conducted by Peggy Troyer at 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, will be on pause for two weeks in April. No classes will be held April 9, 11, 16 and 18. Classes will resume Tuesday, April 23. If you are curious about this stretch, toning and rebalancing class, please check it out in the SPC fellowship hall.



Spring Church Clean-Up

Saturday, April 13, 9 a.m.

We need your help at the annual spring church clean-up. This is a wonderful opportunity for folks of all ages and skillsets to get to know their church family in a meaningful way and—at the same time—to spruce up the church and make it look great. Please contact Sam Stearns with questions or to sign up. We'll have coffee and donuts ready for you. Thank you for pitching in.



Give the Gift of Life: Faithful Neighbors Blood Drive

Sunday, April 14, 8 a.m.–1 p.m.

Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, 7400 Hampton Blvd., Norfolk

SPC joins together with three other faith communities in trying to be faithful neighbors in terms of giving blood. If you're able, we encourage you to join our neighbors across the street at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church and give blood for the Red Cross. You can sign up at the Red Cross website by searching for "Faithful Neighbors" or the April 14 date.



FIN Needs Volunteers Wednesday, April 17

Help support Special Audience night at the Tattoo

Faith Inclusion Network, or FIN, seeks volunteers to help support Special Audience night at the Virginia International Tattoo. On Wednesday, April 17, volunteers will need to arrive at Norfolk's Scope Arena at 6:30 p.m. to greet attendees, hand out any FIN giveaway items, and assist at the snacks table. To learn more or to volunteer, contact Lori Crouch.

Caring for Our Youngest: Nursery Supervisor Position Open

Have a positive impact on children every Sunday morning

If you know of a caring and welcoming individual—good with infants and children—who might be interested in serving in our church nursery Sunday mornings for three hours, please encourage them to contact Jo in the church office at 757.423.2822 for a job description and application. This is a unique opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of young children, their families, and our congregation. If you could share this job posting, we would be grateful.

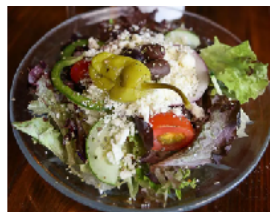


A Time of Prayer

*Sunday, April 21, 12:30 p.m.
SPC Prayer Room*

On the third Sunday of each month, you're invited to gather with others after worship at SPC

for a focused time of prayer. Your presence on our prayer team adds a unique and valuable voice. For more information, contact Andrea Franklin-Matheson, SPC's Coordinator of Intergenerational Outreach.



Orapax to Host Ladies' Night Out

All SPC women invited

Ladies' Night Out will be held at Orapax restaurant, 1300 Redgate Ave. in the Chelsea

district of Norfolk at 6 pm. Monday, April 29. If street parking is full, a free lot is a block away at the corner of Orapax Street and Raleigh Avenue. If you plan to attend, contact Lynn Ruehlmann by Sunday, April 28.



In March, SPC's longtime softball coach and barbecue authority Dave Horner displayed another culinary skill when his beer-bacon-chocolate chili was voted most creative at the annual SPC Chili Cookoff. Congrats, Dave!



SPC Art Show Coming in May

Mark your calendar for Saturday, May 4

The second annual SPC Art Show will be held Saturday, May 4, this time on the lawn, weather permitting. The event will include food trucks and a variety of vendors. If someone you know is interested in showing, have them call the church office at 757.423.2822 to get on the list. As with last year's event, this is again a no-fee show, so artists will not be charged for participating. Please see Peggy Troyer with any questions. And put it on your calendar for a fun Saturday activity!

There is definitely a place for you at Second Presbyterian!

SPC April Calendar

Monday, April 1

Micah Erickson's & David Ferraro's Birthdays

No activities

Tuesday, April 2

The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]

Wednesday, April 3

Roger Phelps' Birthday

The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH]
Brown Bag Bible Study: Noon [FH]

Thursday, April 4

The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]
BEMA Bible Study: 7:45PM [Zoom]

Friday, April 5

Mark Stearns' Birthday

Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

Saturday, April 6

No activities

Sunday, April 7

The office is open from 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Adult Sunday School: 9:45AM [FH]
Children's Sunday School: 9:45AM [Upstairs]
Worship: 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast]:
Fellowship Time: Noon [FH]

Monday, April 8

No activities

Tuesday, April 9

Linda Mathias' Birthday

The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Triple "S" Circle: 10:30AM [FH]

Wednesday, April 10

The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH]
Brown Bag Bible Study: Noon [FH]
St. Columba sandwich-making: 1PM [FH]
An Evening at Bold Mariner Brewing: 5:45PM [1901 E. Ocean View Ave., Norfolk]

Thursday, April 11

BEMA Bible Study: 7:45PM [Zoom]

Friday, April 12

Jo Kolb's Birthday

Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

Saturday, April 13

Spring Church Clean-up: 9AM [SPC]

Sunday, April 14

Jonathan Doyle's & Sheila Eley's Birthdays
The office is open from 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Faithful Neighbors Blood Drive: 8AM-1PM [Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, Norfolk]
Adult Sunday School: 9:45AM [FH]
Children's Sunday School: 9:45AM
Worship: 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast]
A Feast of Words Fellowship: Noon [FH]

Monday, April 15

No activities

Tuesday, April 16

The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Session Meeting: 6PM [SPC]

Wednesday, April 17

The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH]
Brown Bag Bible Study: Noon [FH]

Thursday, April 18

LAUNCH Volunteer Opportunities: Various times [See Joe Morgan]
BEMA Bible Study: 7:45PM [Zoom]

Friday, April 19

Suellen White's Birthday

Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]
YOURS' Youth of Excellence Awards Banquet: 6:30PM [First Presbyterian Church, Norfolk]

Saturday, April 20

St. Columba Silent Auction & Benefit Dinner: 5PM [Bayside Presbyterian Church, Virginia Beach]

Sunday, April 21

The office is open from 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Choir Rehearsal: 9AM [Sanctuary]
Adult Sunday School: 9:45AM [FH]
Children's Sunday School: 9:45AM [Upstairs]
Worship: 11 AM [Sanctuary/webcast]
Fellowship Time: Noon [FH]
Prayer Team: 12:30PM [Prayer Room]

Monday, April 22

No activities

Tuesday, April 23

The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]

Wednesday, April 24

The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH]
Brown Bag Bible Study: Noon [FH]
Dinner & Walking the Path of Hope: 6PM [FH]

Thursday, April 25

Arlene Baragona's Birthday

Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]
BEMA Bible Study: 7:45PM [Zoom]

Friday, April 26

Lori Crouch's & Helen Pribesh's Birthdays

Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

Saturday, April 27

Bill Ruehlmann's Birthday

No activities

Sunday, April 28

The office is open from 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Worship: 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast]
Eating Like St. Francis Fellowship: Noon [FH]

Monday, April 29

Ladies' Night Out: 6PM [Orapax, 1300 Redgate Ave., Norfolk]

Tuesday, April 30

John Sawyer's Birthday

The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]

Save the Date

Saturday, May 4
SPC Art Show

*FH: SPC Fellowship Hall

About Second Presbyterian Church

7305 Hampton Blvd., Norfolk, VA 23505 | 757.423.2822 | spcnorfolk.org | facebook.com/secondpresbyteriannorfolk
Office hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.; Sundays 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

- Dr. Craig Wansink, Senior Pastor: 757.412.7467, cwansink@vwu.edu
- Rev. Catherine Hart Monroe, Covenant Associate Pastor: 757.287.9897, revcat@spcnorfolk.org
- Rev. Nancy Rowland, Parish Associate: 302.354.5880, rowlandnancy73@gmail.com
- Robert Shoup, Director of Music: 757.739.9444, shoup.robert@spcnorfolk.org
- Jo Ridout Kolb, Director of Communications & Administration: 757.406.0879, jokolb@spcnorfolk.org
- Andrea Franklin-Matheson, Coordinator of Intergenerational Outreach: andrea@spcnorfolk.org
- Tom Libbey, Facilities Manager; Joe Morgan, Maintenance Specialist; Barbara Watson, Housekeeper and Host