Second Life +

The Newsletter of Second Presbyterian Church

May 2024

Seeing Red: SPC Celebrates the Holy Spirit on Pentecost

May 19: "Bewildered: Struck by God's Word" (Acts 2:1-12)

Pentecost is considered the birthday of the church. Yet you'll be relieved to know that no cards or gifts are necessary when SPC celebrates this special event Sunday, May 19.

You will, however, see red that day—in a good way.

Pentecost is the day we remember the power of the Holy Spirit as it shaped the first disciples and their mission. Acts 2 says that a mighty wind entered the room where the disciples gathered, and "tongues of fire," burning with good news, came among those present.



In remembering those tongues of fire, the color red is associated with this day. To that end, everyone is invited to wear red to worship. Red ties, hats, shoes, tuxedos—this is the day to put those red items in your closet to good use.

Continuing another long-time Pentecost tradition at SPC, the Tomcats Toe Tappin' Dixieland Band will jazz up the spirit of our festive celebration with their upbeat take on joyful hymns.

Join us as we reflect on what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit through scripture, words, color, and music.

And then for fellowship time, please bring red food. Curry, watermelon, Jell-o, apples, cherries, peppers—get creative!



Pentecost Intergenerational Sunday School

9:45-10:35 a.m., SPC fellowship hall

Gather with us for Pentecost charades, hear old stories in new ways, decorate in anticipation of worship, and create tongues of fire. We need people of all ages and abilities—in red—for this special event!



Picture This: SPC Art Show Coming This Saturday

Discover the extraordinary talents of SPC members, friends, and neighbors at the second annual SPC Art Show, set for 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. this Saturday, May 4. You might even end up with artwork to display in your own home.

If the weather cooperates, the show will be held on the SPC lawn. If not, the event will be in the fellowship hall. Plan on having lunch, too—Smoked Biscuit and Mr. Softee food trucks also will be on hand.

From the Senior Pastor

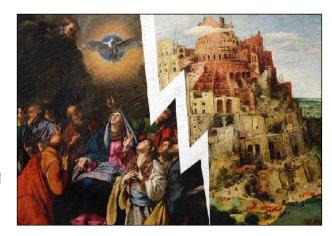
New Life at Pentecost (and Asking for Your Clothes)

Within Christianity, Pentecost refers to the day when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples of Jesus, joining them together into the church. In general, this holy day is celebrated with much less enthusiasm than Christmas or Easter. Hallmark doesn't even sell appropriate cards for Christians to give one another.

Or maybe we just enjoy the birth of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus more than we do the birth of the church, since we can see the church, and sometimes it has some serious issues.

Or there may be a more theological reason. Some mainstream Christians focus more on a "binity" than a Trinity. They can easily imagine God in heaven and God in the flesh, but the Holy Spirit is a little too abstract. Even a little too out of control.

Or maybe the description of the first Pentecost just seems odd, with wind and fire coming upon the disciples, and with unusual languages being spoken and understood.



My home church never celebrated Pentecost. The first church I worked at, outside of Chicago, always celebrated by having a big birthday cake and singing happy birthday to the church.

During my time at Second, however, I feel like I have made up for lost time in terms of my enjoyment and deep appreciation of this day.

It has been a long tradition at Second to wear red clothes on Pentecost. And then about a decade ago, we started the tradition of having a Dixieland jazz band join us. And then a couple of years ago, we started having a potluck of red foods in the fellowship hall. All of that creates joy.

What I also appreciate about those traditions is that they build community. Aside from everything else, Pentecost reminds us of what it means to be unified or to be a community. That emphasis has been seen over the last 2,000 years, with the stories of the tower of Babel and of Pentecost frequently put next to each other. Pentecost is seen as a reversal of what happened during the tower of Babel when everyone went their own way.



This year for Pentecost, we're working on another way of coming together. Over the next few weeks we're collecting "flames" that you'll cut out from your clothing. Maybe from a former tie or scarf that you used to wear. Or from a skirt or shirt that no longer fits. We're asking you to take a pattern—that we have at the church and which we will email out—and cut out a flame-shaped piece of cloth from a brightly colored piece of clothing. Your "flame" will be combined with those from others in the church in a distinct banner.

Years ago we did this to create a communion tablecloth that we still use. That cloth pulls together our community through neckties and clothes samples from years past.

At Second we celebrate Pentecost in many fun ways. At the same time, I'm deeply grateful for what Second has taught me about the Holy Spirit.

Probably 25 years ago, the former pastor at Second, Steve Frazier, talked with me about an issue that was troubling me. "You aren't leaving much room for the Holy Spirit to operate here," he said. And he was right. Sometimes we don't trust that God can break into our lives in ways that really are life-giving.

As I've come to grow at Second, I've increasingly recognized that when people of faith come together, and work together, and strengthen each other, the Holy Spirit moves among them in ways that result in new life, amazing opportunities, and growth beyond what anyone could ever imagine.

I'm grateful for the ways in which you've inspired those changes in my own life and in our church family.

Happy Pentecost! Pastor Craig

Through the Eyes of Francis

Perhaps no religious figure outside of the Bible has shaped faith more than Francis of Assisi. In this series, we continue to look at our lives through the Bible and the faith of this remarkable individual.

- 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)



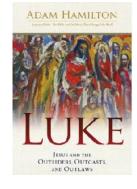
New Sermon Series

Heavenly Visions: Artistic Interpretations of Revelation

The Book of Revelation shares odd, sometimes bizarre, sometimes deeply touching visions of a world very different than our own. Journey with us into key texts, engaging descriptions, and renowned artworks.

- May 26 *Lifting the Veil on the Alpha and the Omega* (Rev. 1:4-8) with "Landscape with Saint John on Patmos" by Nicolas Poussin
- June 2 "Worthy is the Lamb": A Vision for the Future (Revelation 5:1-1) with "The Four and Twenty Elders Casting their Crowns before the Divine Throne" by William Blake
- June 9 *Riders on the Storm: Navigating the Tribulations of* Revelation (Revelation 6:1-8) with "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" by Albrecht Dürer
- June 16 *"Behold, I Make All Things New": Heaven on Earth* (Revelation 21:1-7) with "The New Jerusalem" by Gustave Doré





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

A Sunday morning study for adults: May 5 & 12, 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.

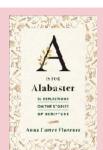


Seven Letters for Seven Churches

A Sunday morning study for adults with Pastor Craig: May 26, 9:45-10:35 a.m. SPC fellowship hall

Many Christians don't realize that the Book of

Revelation contains seven little letters. In Revelation 2-3, these letters speak to seven cities in modern Turkey. Each of those cities faced different challenges, challenges that resulted in the writing of this very unusual book. What do their challenges say to us? That is our focus.



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 "Now <u>That's</u> Praying"

Jazz helps us be sensitive to the whole range of existence. Far from offering us rose-colored glasses ... it realistically speaks of sorrow and pain.... Jazz stimulates us to feel deeply and truthfully....

Jazz thunders a mighty "yes." —Alvin L. Kershaw, "Religion and Jazz"

Before reading further, allow me to reassure you that I'm not about to try to persuade you one way or another about jazz music as a style that you should or shouldn't "like." I am not a jazz musician, but I resonate with ideas and observations that have been made about it and how they can reflect our experience of faith. I recently read a meditation on this topic with contributions from numerous writers, musicians, and faith leaders.

Barbara A. Holmes, a teacher at the Center for Action and Contemplation in New Mexico, shares insights about the role of intellect vs. "wonder":

When we decide to live in our heads only, we become isolated from the God who is closer than our next breath. To subject everything to rational analysis reduces the awe to ashes. The restoration of wonder is the beginning of the inward journey toward a God who people of faith aver is always waiting in the seeker's heart.



Pastor William Carter, who's also a jazz pianist

I love acknowledging awe as partner to rationality, recognition that we can diminish our experience with God to analysis rather than *relationship* to the one who is "closer than our next breath." I find that many of my questions related to the experience of prayer are answered in these observations. Jazz pianist and minister (I love that combination!) William Carter discusses the connection between prayer and jazz:

I have a high view of instrumental music as a potential spiritual gift for the listener and the musician alike.... A jazz quartet can utter things in the presence of God that mere words fail to say. A saxophone can lament on behalf of those who feel helpless. A piano may offer intercessions for those who are in need. A string bass can affirm the firm foundation of faith. Drums and cymbals may call pilgrims to break into joy.

Such observations extend beyond the jazz form: organ, choirs, flute, cello—each of these and more can play meaningful roles in prayer that surpass "mere words." But there are elements unique to jazz that extend prayerful expression into wonderfully uncomfortable and risky areas: leaving the safety of an underlying musical structure to *improvise*—on the spot, and to do so in a kind of musical dialogue that is singularly *jazz*. Poet Ron Seitz shares this experience he had with theologian Thomas Merton:

...he went with Merton to a jazz club in Louisville. As the group began to play,
Merton leaned over to whisper, "They're going to start talking to each other now. Listen." Then he moved closer to the
bandstand to get a better look. Later, returning with his eyes wide, he said to Seitz,
"Now that's praying. That's some kind of prayer! The new liturgy. Really, I'm not kidding."

There is a relational aspect to this kind of music that reflects active, engaged, energized communication—between artists in a musical sense, but as a reflection of prayer, between us and our God. Life is not written out in neatly planned notes and rhythms, reliably scheduled verses and choruses. Life presents us with opportunities to lean on the structures we know—lessons learned of faith—so that we can joyfully improvise our exclamations and responses to the challenges and opportunities presented by unpredictable days. It makes me smile when I consider how a prayer life that looks and feels like this might impact our collective spirits.

Now, that would be praying.

Peace, Bob

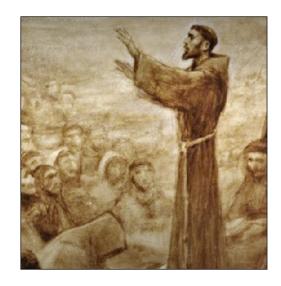
Church News and Activities

Missions and Outreach: Be Prepared to Share

"Preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if necessary."

That's a saying often incorrectly attributed to St. Francis of Assisi to underscore the importance of making sure that our faith is visibly lived out in our daily actions and interactions with those around us. Our faith is a radical faith, and living it out in our daily lives requires constant effort as we contend with all that the world, the flesh, and the Devil throw at us.

While St. Francis did model a radical commitment in his life, he was most remembered for his words—for his preaching and teaching. He was always ready to explain with words "why" he was living a life wholly dependent on the Lord. As we are all called to be in 1 Peter 3:15, Francis was always "prepared to



give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have within you." In fact, he probably wouldn't want this quote attributed to him—especially if it's read as an excuse not to talk about our faith!

The Missions and Outreach committee encourages you to be ready to share the hope you have with those around you. As you live your life, you'll encounter the lost, the hungry, the hurting. As you engage with them—with gentleness and respect—be prepared to share the good news, the life-changing good news, that they are loved by the Creator God of the Universe, and there is a way, through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the dead, for each of us to be in a restored relationship with God. That is the hope we have within us.

Being prepared means thinking about what we might say before we're asked. You don't have to have a theological nine-point speech memorized, but you should be ready to explain in your own words—as you understand yourself—what it means to be in a right relationship with the Lord and what it means to you to be free from the fear of death that had enslaved you. To be prepared always, we need to marinate in God's word and pray for eyes open for opportunities to live our faith out in deeds and words. If you want help being prepared, if you want to practice how you might share the Gospel, we're always ready to listen.

God bless you this month as you do so.

Our missionaries to the Middle East, Jake and Anna Kerr, would greatly appreciate your prayers for them as they seek God's will for when they might return to their ministry from the sabbatical they've been on in the United States. They paused plans to return after the ongoing war in Israel was broadened to include Iran. Please pray that God would give them wisdom, as they're eager to get back to their ministry.

-Mark Erickson, Coordinator, Missions and Outreach Committee

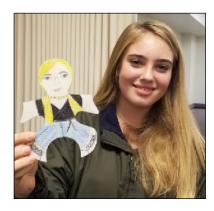
St. Columba has an ongoing need for non-perishable food items for its pantry, such as pasta, rice, peanut butter, and canned goods, as well as large containers of ground coffee for the day shelter.

Financial Resources for LAUNCH Diminishing

The Learning, Access, Unity, Careers, Nutrition, Health (LAUNCH) collaborative has been blessed with material and volunteer resources, particularly during the pandemic. But many of those financial resources are being discontinued. So, right-sizing for continued programs is likely.

The steadfast service of dozens of SPC volunteers has been a sustaining underpinning to the monthly distribution of 5,000 pounds of food to 100 families. On average, this considerable quantity of food is made available for handling costs of about 20 cents per pound. We have come far by faith, and Lord willing, the way to future outreach will be revealed. Opportunities for support are diverse, such as the Horners' recent donation of a utility trailer for materials handling.

Church News and Activities



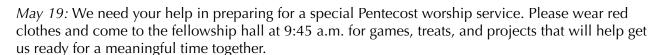
Welcome Back to Ava Libbey

As we continue to look for a permanent nursery supervisor, we're delighted that Ava Libbey (the one on the right in the photo) will be back from Virginia Tech for the summer and will serve in the nursery from May 19 through August 18. Welcome back, Ava! We're so glad to have you home.

Still, if you know of a caring and welcoming individual—good with infants and children—who might be interested in serving in our church nursery for three-hour shifts Sunday mornings, please encourage them to contact Jo Kolb in the church office at 757.423.2822 for a job description and application.

SPY KIDS (Second Presbyterian Youth & Kids Investigating Divine Stories) *Sundays, May 5, 12, and 19, 9:45-10:35 a.m.*

May 5 and 12: Join Pastor Craig in the library as we use spy techniques, watch some videos—and have fun treats—as we look more deeply at unusual Bible stories.





GOOD NEWS

A Meal, Some Good News, and a Congregational Meeting

Dinner, Conversation, and a Vote: Wednesday, May 8, 6-7:15 p.m.

The events we host and the outreach we take part in frequently are featured in photos and in the "Mission and Ministry" time of our worship. At the same time, other aspects of the church can't quickly be shared in an image or a soundbite.

This evening, Pastor Craig, Clerk Larry Hull, and others will share some of what is happening at SPC that might not be immediately obvious, but that should shape us in new, important, and meaningful ways. For example, when Jean Morton passed, she left us a substantive bequest. How might that be used? What purposes might it serve? What's happening with our mission partners overseas? What changes need to be made in our facilities and what possibilities are there as we think to the future?

We've been working with a group called Digital Congregations to help us think more clearly about our identity, how we need to communicate more effectively, and the changes we need to make to our website. What does that mean for you?

And will we approve Pastor Craig to serve another year? That is one of the specific items that needs to be voted on. SPC has much good news to share. We hope you'll join us.

Taste and See that the Lord Is Good: A Potluck at the Monroes

Wednesday, May 22, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

At the home of Catherine and Chuck Monroe, 960 Jamestown Crescent, Norfolk

All are welcome. Please bring an appetizer, salad, main course, or dessert, and join in an evening of fellowship and meaningful reflection together.



Church News and Activities



A Time of Prayer

Sunday, May 19, 12:30 p.m. SPC Prayer Room

On the third Sunday of each month, you're invited to join 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.



Ladies' Night Out

Monday, May 20 6 p.m., Degollado Mexican Restaurant

Ladies' Night Out will be held at Degollado Mexican Restaurant,

3814 E. Little Creek Road, Norfolk at 6 pm. Monday, May 20. If you plan to attend, contact Lynn Ruehlmann by Sunday, May 19. And invite a friend!



Outdoor Worship with the SPC Band

Sunday, May 26, 11 a.m., Robertson Family Deck at SPC

Enjoy an outdoor service with the SPC worship band on a beautiful spring day (we hope!). Gather with us at the Robertson Family Deck in your casual attire, and bring a lawn chair if you have one. (If not, we'll have folding chairs.)

Coming in June

The Geography of Heaven, Hell, and Faith

Saturday, June 22, 11 a.m. The Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk

How do artists portray those places—like heaven or hell—that lie beyond our experience and imagination? Or how do they illustrate what happens where otherworldly imagery comes (either crashing or surreptitiously) into the concrete reality of our world? Works from the Chrysler Museum of Art help us answer those questions. Join Pastor Craig as he leads us through some unfamiliar works of the Chrysler collection.

Event of Interest

A Journey through Cherokee Language and Culture

Wednesday, May 8, 7 p.m., MacArthur Memorial Visitor Center Theater, downtown Norfolk

In this free presentation at the Norfolk Historical Society, Kole Matheson who teaches at ODU—our Kole!—presents a concise exploration of the Cherokee language's history and linguistic features. You'll learn about Sequoyah's creation of the Cherokee syllabary in the 19th century and the ongoing efforts by the Cherokee Nation in language revitalization.



Good weather, good people—what else could SPC need to carry out a successful church work day in April. Thanks to everyone who pitched in to make our church bloom and shine.

SPC May Calendar

Wednesday, May 1

Evelyn Morissette's Birthday

The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH] Brown Bag Bible Study: Noon [FH] Choir Rehearsal: 7:30PM [Sanctuary]

Thursday, May 2

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

Friday, May 3

Linda Parks' Birthday Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

SPC Softball: 6:45PM [Northside Park]

Saturday, May 4

SPC Art Show: 11AM to 4PM [SPC lawn]

Sunday, May 5

The office is open from 9:30AM to 12:30PM Choir Rehearsal: 9AM [Sanctuary] Adult Sunday School: 9:45AM [FH] SPY Kids Sunday School: 9:45AM [Library] Worship: 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast] Fellowship Time: Noon [FH]

Monday, May 6

Karen Erickson's Birthday

No activities

Tuesday, May 7

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

Wednesday, May 8

Joey Libbey's Birthday

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] Dinner & Congregational Meeting: 6PM [FH] Cherokee Language & Culture presented by Kole Matheson: 7PM [MacArthur Memorial Visitor Center]

Choir Rehearsal: 7:30PM [Sanctuary]

Thursday, May 9

Hassan Ndahi's Birthday

Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]

Friday, May 10

Ray Platte's Birthday Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

SPC Softball: 6:45PM [Northside Park]

Saturday, May 11 No activities

Sunday, May 12

The office is open from 9:30AM to 12:30PM Choir Rehearsal: 9AM [Sanctuary] Adult Sunday School: 9:45AM [FH] SPY Kids Sunday School: 9:45AM [Library] Worship: 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast]

Fellowship: Time Noon [FH]

Monday, May 13 No activities

Tuesday, May 14

The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM

Triple "S" Circle: 10:30AM [FH] Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]

Wednesday, May 15

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

Thursday, May 16

LAUNCH Volunteer Opportunities: Various

times [See Joe Morgan]

Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]

Friday, May 17

Clay Tinkham's Birthday Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

SPC Softball: 6:45PM [Northside Park]

Saturday, May 18 No activities

Sunday, May 19

The office is open from 9:30AM to 12:30PM **Pentecost Intergenerational Sunday School:** 9:45AM [FH]

Pentecost Worship with Dixieland Band: 11 AM [Sanctuary/webcast]

Red Food Fellowship Time: Noon [FH] Prayer Team: 12:30PM [Prayer Room]

Monday, May 20

Jonathan Erickson's Birthday

Ladies' Night Out: 6PM [Degollado Mexican Restaurant, 3814 E. Little Creek Road, Norfolk]

Tuesday, May 21

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

Session Meeting: 6PM [SPC]

Wednesday, May 22

Stephanie Sugioka's Birthday

The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH] Brown Bag Bible Study: Noon [FH] Potluck at the Monroes: 6PM [960 Jamestown Crescent, Norfolk]

Thursday, May 23 John Klein's Birthday

Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]

Friday, May 24

Philip Byrd's, Nancy Chapman's, and

Elizabeth Stacks' Birthdays Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

Saturday, May 25 No activities

Sunday, May 26

Jonathan Todd's Birthday

The office is open from 9:30AM to 12:30PM Adult Sunday School: 9:45AM [FH]

Outdoor Worship: 11AM [Deck/webcast]

Fellowship Time: Noon [FH]

Monday, May 27 No activities

Tuesday, May 28

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

Wednesday, May 29

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

Brown Bag Bible Study: Noon [FH]

Thursday, May 30

Dillon Courtois' and Donna Mills' Birthdays The office is open from 10:30AM to 1:30PM Essentrics Exercise:1PM [Zoom & FH]

Friday, May 31

Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

SPC Softball: 6:45PM [Northside Park]

Save the Date

The Geography of Heaven, Hell & Faith Saturday, June 22, 11 a.m. The Chrysler Museum of Art

*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