



FIRST & FRANKLIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

COMMUNITY *News*

JULY/AUGUST 2021



210 W MADISON STREET | BALTIMORE, MD 21201 | (410) 728-5545 | FIRSTFRANKLIN.ORG

WORSHIP CALENDAR

July 4: **“Honest Patriotism”**

Job 34: 16-22, 26-30

I Peter 3: 8-18; 4: 16-19.

Liturgist: Allie Pyan

Ushers: Mike Johnson & Marla Holt

Communion Sunday

July 11: **“The Importance of Listening: Sabrina Schumann”**

Usher: Nusrat David

July 18: **“Music, Art, & The Sublime”**

Ezekiel 1:1, 4, 13-14, 22-28.

Revelation 21: 9-21; 22: 1-5

Liturgist: Rev. Steve Hollaway

July 25: **“What Is Mission?”**

Isaiah 49:1-2, 6, 8-10, 24-25

Matthew 9:35-38

Liturgist: Nusrat David

Installation & Ordination of Elders & Deacons

August 1: Rev. Jack Hodges preaching

Communion Sunday

August 8: **“Serenity & The Bomb”**

Jeremiah 23: 15-20, 28-32.

I Corinthians 1: 26-29.

August 15: **“The World of the Thriller”**

(Spy and detective novels and films)

Judges 20: 3b-7, 12-13. Acts 16: 16-28.

August 22: **“Borderline Personalities”**

Proverbs 15: 32—16:8; 17: 19-24.

I Timothy 6: 3-8, 11-16.

August 29: **“Grief, Memory, and Hope”**

Psalms 90: 1-6, 9-10. II Corinthians 4:7-5:1.

September 5: **“The Social Creed”**

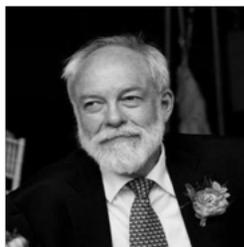
Isaiah 65: 17-25. John 10: 9-17.

Upcoming Meetings

Session and Deacons Meeting: July 16

Session Meeting: July 20, Aug 24

Deacons Meeting: Aug 19



ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH SOLITUDE? ENOUGH SUBLIME?

Odd question after a year plus of semi-lock down? Loneliness a major problem in the culture, few places to meet new people without risk, restaurants and retail need customers back... But yes, summer is a time to inhale nature, or walk different streets, to reflect, and to pray.

Whether we are extroverted or introverted, getting energy from social encounters or being drained by them, we have some mixture of community time and solitude. Too much isolation and we become overly wary, uncertain of how to read people, self-conscious and second-guessing ourselves. Yet there are certainly good reasons for solitariness. I think of one young widow, caring marriage, secure kids, until a spouse dies suddenly, and then covid... To think about a tragic loss like that makes me pray for all of them.

Same thing with older friends—in their 80's and 90's. Part of the gift of their longevity—and for single people especially—is that they always made space for space. The spaces between people were always important. In my view, God gives them a sense of their own value without the mirror or re-assurance of a close partner nearby. The German philosopher Schopenhauer may speak for them when he wrote, “whoever does not enjoy solitude will not love freedom.”

We do need community as well, especially as most of us have smaller families. People make various social spaces into informal communities. Sometimes we say that their club or gathering place has become their church. That means a place where they have a place, where they are known and know others, where they feel accepted and they can be themselves.

Part of church in this sense is that the solitude in each of us is accepted. We may be self-conscious singing—many men are, insecure letting any uncontrolled emotion get out. But even quiet Presbyterians have emotions, and maturity is getting comfortable with our own emotional range—and those of others. The vulnerability of others does not scare us because we know more about our own.

Solitude is a time when we can sort those feelings out, remember who needs our prayer, say thanks to God the gift of particular friends or family. Worship is partly the reinforcement simply of seeing sister and brother pilgrims, even if we don't get to know them right away, or ever share much of everyday interests. We both know we are not afraid of the largeness of life, into which God lures and sometimes pulls us. *Continued on page 2*

Continued...

Nineteenth Century Christians would sometimes walk, alone in the woods in search of the “sublime.” The New World Dictionary defines this as: “The sublime, in aesthetics (from the Latin *sublimis*, [looking up from] under the lintel, high, lofty, elevated, exalted), is the quality of greatness or vast magnitude...” This is partly a “Romantic” conception, a bonding with something outside ourselves that takes us outside of ourselves—but it is also a “Gothic” idea, combining beauty, and awe, and even fear of the uncanny.

This *sublime* is what our neo-Gothic spire and sanctuary are about, and it requires some solitude for us to be open enough to see it fully.

Some of you have already gotten away to the beach, and others cannot get away very easily. We hope you will worship with us when you can, and get away when you can, and with both that you will have a sublime summer!

Chris

SESSION GUIDANCE REGARDING WORSHIP

With the continuing rise of vaccination and decline in cases, Baltimore City has lifted the mask order as of July 1st. Fully vaccinated individuals are now welcome to go unmasked indoors and relax social distancing.

While we are excited for this progress, we still highly encourage anyone who is not yet fully vaccinated to continue to wear a mask indoors at First & Franklin. This helps protect members of our community who may not be able to get a vaccine or those for whom the vaccine is less effective. Some vaccinated folks might choose to continue to wear masks and maintain distance due to their comfort level. Let us continue to treat each other with care as everyone adjusts to the changes at their own pace.

CALL FOR USHERS, COFFEE-HOUR HOSTS, AND LITURGISTS



Now that we are inviting you to in-person worship, we need YOUR help to fill our schedule with ushers, liturgists and fellowship or coffee hour hosts (please individually wrap your food items at this time.)

Please consider this donation of your time as part of your gift to your church. Pull out your calendar and let's fill up those open spaces. Please reach out to the Worship Committee or the Church Office to sign up!

HEIDI DESSECKER, HUMANITARIAN



There is a saying that once you drink from the Nile, you will always be called back. In my case, it is currently the part of the White Nile that traverses the length of South Sudan.

I often struggle to put into words what life in South Sudan is like. It remains the world's youngest nation, preparing to celebrate just its tenth year of independence in July 2021. Unfortunately, the celebratory atmosphere at its birth evaporated into bitter civil conflict less than three years later. A peace deal officially ended the war at the end of 2018, but violence among armed groups persists in many parts of the country. Government spending on social services is abysmal, to the point that a government official infamously revealed publicly that the Ministry of Health has not imported a single drug in more than two years. The country has the land potential to feed all of its people and export to neighbors, but an estimated 7.2 million, about 50% of the population, are acutely food insecure.



That's the bad stuff, the reasons why humanitarian organizations like mine, and people like me are called there. Being a humanitarian aid worker is a job that is simultaneously exhausting and invigorating, a way of living that is both sacrificial and self-serving. Some days I'm not sure if I am more of a humanist or just an adrenaline junkie. My contribution at the moment is working with government and United Nations donors to mobilize dollars to operate my organization's work.

So what keeps me there? Besides that Nile water. It is another thing I find difficult to express with words. I was recently reflecting on Acts 17: 26-28, “From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth...” If there is one thing 2020 has highlighted for me, it is our interconnectedness. If not through shared circumstances, then through our creator and through our core beings. I feel a deep pull from somewhere deep inside to explore places, people, ways of life, to find interconnectedness where it is not expected. And hopefully doing some good in the process.

The same path that led me to the Nile in the first also led me to First and Franklin, when I moved to Baltimore in 2014 to take my first job in the humanitarian sector. In First and Franklin, I was privileged to find a dynamic community of people living out their own callings and wide variety of gifts and talents. I am grateful to still call this place home, and feel the interconnectedness, even from far away. - Heidi

LETTER FROM TAYLOR BROOKS



Dear First & Franklin Family,

This is actually my second letter to everyone—the first letter I wrote ended up getting thrown into a recycling bin (that should tell you something about how goofy the rest of my platoon is—the two people assigned to deposit letters that day didn't know what a blue UPS mailbox looks like).

Things in BCT (*Army Basic Combat Training*) are going fine! Is difficult, but manageable. I got off to a slow, slow start. So I didn't really "start" BCT until last Saturday (June 5). Expecting my graduation date to be August 12.

Just to catch everyone up, I ended up signing a five-year contract to become a medical lab technician. I'll be in training for the next year and a half, then I'll work as a lab tech for the remainder of my contract in various military hospitals/clinics. At the end of my contract, I'll serve an additional three years in the reserves, and will be able to go back to college on the Army's dime.

We are not allowed to talk during meals here but I've been doing clandestine line meal prayer anyway – making F & F proud on that front. Also been collecting a kind of joy/concerns from my platoon (the 60+ men that I share a large, open suite of bunk beds with), and it's been a real treat to exercise my spiritual muscles in an environment where I can play the mentor.

I was thinking this letter could be scanned and included in the newsletter or something—I wasn't able to disseminate my mailing address until recently. Also, congregants can use a digital letter writing service called "Sandboxx" to write to me (it's a military specific service) as an alternative. I'm not really allowed to receive anything but letters (even though I would lose my marbles over a bag of Reese Pieces). Either way, I could really use some encouragement and sense of normalcy these next couple of months.

God's peace,

Taylor Brooks

PFC Taylor Brooks
Bravo Company, 1-48 INF BN
Fort Leonard Wood, MO 65473

Note: We are still taking a collection for Taylor in appreciation of his service. Please send your contributions to the church office if you wish to participate.

NEW DIRECTORY!



UPDATE



We are starting to get Directory Forms back and we are hoping to wrap up the project by mid-JULY. Have you submitted yours yet? Please help us connect our community with your information.

If you need a hard copy mailed to you or you need help with a picture, please let us know.

Please click: [Directory Form](#) to fill out the Directory Form so that you can submit your information to be included in First & Franklin's Directory. The completed form should be submitted to Directory@firstfranklin.org. Thank you.

FIRST & FRANKLIN FOOD PANTRY HOURS OF OPERATION CHANGING



The First & Franklin Food Pantry will be changing its hours of operation starting July 3, 2021. We will be open between 1:00 pm- 3:00 pm. Food donations are still invaluable in helping those who suffer from food insecurity. You may drop off your donations at Reid Chapel during office hours on weekdays or on Saturdays from 1:00 pm-3:00 pm. If you cannot shop but wish to contribute, please send your donations to the church marked Food Pantry and we will take care of filling our shelves. Thank you for your generous support.

Church Committee Meeting Schedule



7/5 & 8/2- Mission & Education Meeting- 7:00 pm
7/20 & 8/17- Session Meeting - 6:30 pm
7/22 & 8/26- Membership Meeting - 7:00 pm
7/27 & 8/24- Finance Meeting - 5:15 pm
8/9 - Worship Arts & Music Meeting 6:00 pm



BIRTHDAYS

JULY

13 - Pam White
14 - Christian Schroll
15 - Robert Schroll
16 - Scot Spencer
17 - Meredith Piplani-Smith
24 - John Johnston
28 - Gail Birdsong, Steven Hollaway
30 - Nonso Anaedozi

AUGUST

1 - Doug Savin
9 - Jim Sinclair
11 - Norvell Miller, Onyeka Anaedozi
14 - Madge Franklin
18 - Martha Armenti
22 - Paul Fowler
24 - Rhonda Cooper
26 - Stephen Clarke
28 - Charley Boynton

ANNIVERSARIES

JULY

30 - Pam White & Susan Vogt

AUGUST

9 - Audrey Suhr & Rol Anders
14 - Rhonda Cooper & John Wolford

Did we miss including yours? Please let us know!

Please send YOUR news to the church office to include so we can celebrate together. Graduations, weddings, babies, work changes, new houses, you name it!

THE SANCTUARY CHOIR AT FIRST & FRANKLIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



The Psalmist summons us to “make a joyful noise” – whether singing from the pews or from the choir loft, there is a place for everyone’s joyful noise! Church choirs are the parts of congregations that rehearse – that is, an extended voice of the congregation that aids in inspiring and supporting congregational singing, as well as preparing beautiful sacred music of many centuries and traditions as an offering to God.

The Sanctuary Choir at First & Franklin has been on hiatus since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. Our plan is to resume rehearsals on Thursday, September 9 at 7:00 p.m., and return to worship on Sunday, September 12. If you have an interest in singing with the Sanctuary Choir, contact Jason Kissel, Minister of Music & Organist: jkissel@firstfranklin.org

HAVE YOU SEEN our new Progress Pride FLAG?

The Progress Pride flag added five arrow-shaped lines to the six-colored Rainbow Flag, which is widely recognized as the symbol of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ+) community.

A remake of the traditional pride flag with progressive inclusiveness and the emphasis of always moving forward. The colors of rainbow pride flag reflects the diversity of the LGBTQ Community.



**The Church Office will be closed on
Monday, July 5, 2021, in recognition of
Independence Day! We will reopen at
8:00 A.M. on Tuesday, July 6th.**

What is Per Capita?



Have you ever wondered why there is one envelope in the front of your box in a color different from the other? The envelope is marked "Per Capita."

But what does per capita mean to us and why are we asked to support it each year? We Presbyterians have a form of government comprised of the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. In our Presbyterian church, congregations are united in accountability to a regional body called the presbytery. Several presbyteries are combined to make up a synod, and the various synods and presbyteries are joined in the highest body of the Presbyterian polity called the General Assembly. The cost to operate the Church governing structure comes from the Church's general membership, including from you, me, and all of us at First & Franklin. Hence, each member is called upon to pay his or her per capita as a way of sharing the literal cost to run the larger Presbyterian Church. And that is why we are asked every year to pay our respective per head cost.

The per capita cost assigned to our own church must be paid whether each of our members specifically identifies a payment for the cost of the per capita or not. In that regard, at the beginning of each year we ask our members to pay his or her own per capita share (including for all members within a household). That allows Session to focus on the mission of our church that includes all of the church's programming and outreach, together with our music and worship programs that we engage in throughout the year. **This year our per capita cost is \$36.06 per member – less than 70 cents per week!**



We ask that each of you prayerfully consider contributing to First & Franklin for the per capita cost assessed by the Presbytery to us, separate and apart from your pledge or annual giving. If we each paid the per capita cost separately, our budget would benefit dollar for dollar and would allow us to focus not as much on the cost of governance of the greater Church, but on fulfilling the mission of the Church.

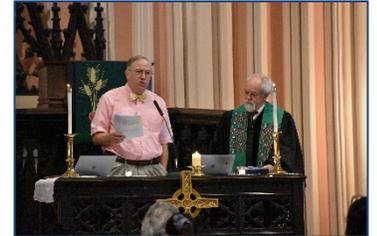
If you do not use the church envelopes, no worry! You can simply mail a check to the church with the subject line: PER CAPITA so that we can record your payment. Or make your payment on our Paypal link.

We are grateful to each and every one of you for all that you do. We thank you for your continued generosity – both of the spirit and of the purse! Thank you for supporting this vital gift that connects our church across our national denomination.

Our Annual Congregational Meeting—in-Brief

The main business of the Annual Report was hearing from the church's leadership, reviewing the budget, and voting on the Nominating Committee's report, and renewing the Session and Board of Deacons. Most committee chairs lifted up highlights from their reports (the Annual report is available from the office, printed copy, though it is also posted online). The interim minister's report looks at relatively short projects that will help change the congregation's momentum.

The Clerk of Session summarized a very unique year in the life of First & Franklin, with both Covid-19 and ministerial transition. We also recognized and expressed our thanks to our interim Treasurer, JT Paulk, who for the past two years has been a tremendous leader and support to the Session.



The new elders elected: Joan B. Gordon, Rebecca Hollaway, and John McLucas.

The new deacons elected: Marla Holt, Michael Johnson, and Randy Veale.

There were no nominees presented for the Nominating Committee itself.

Both the budget and in this case the pastor's "terms of call" (as he is an interim hired by Session) came already approved by the Session.

Comment was made on the two retreats held in the Spring, and correspondence with the Patrick Allison House's re-entry program and The Center, with its four interns in the Hodge House this summer.

We closed out the meeting with a delicious catered lunch organized by Becca Hollaway and her team of fellowship helpers.



CHILDREN'S EDUCATION PROGRAM NEWS



Two sets of parents and children met with Deborah McCrimmon and Chris Iosso to look at the Sunday school rooms and go over the program for September, which will include both infant childcare and at least one class for elementary school age students. Ms. McCrimmon has taught a wide range of children and is dedicated to faith development in age-appropriate ways. She is a former Principal of the Lower School at Friends Academy in Locust Valley, NY (on Long Island), and has been Principal in two other locations, in addition to her direct classroom experience. Depending on registration, we have another experienced teacher ready to join the program. The timeframe will be from 9:15-10:15 in the classrooms on the second floor of Backus House, with the children being brought into the main worship service once per month (currently second Sunday). If you are interested in more information on the program, please call the Church Office: (410) 728-5545.

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT FORUM

Topics and discussion format for the Sunday morning adult program are still being planned as this Newsletter goes to press. Stay tuned for more details!

THEOLOGY on TAP!

We have transitioned to meetings back to being in person again! Please join us at R. HOUSE to continue our rich and lively discussions on the Bible. July 8 & 22 at 7:00 pm.

Theology on Tap
Join us as we study Peter Enns' "How the Bible Actually Works*"
July 8 and July 22, 2021
Let's meet in person!
R. House - 301 W. 29th St.
7-9 p.m.
www.firstfranklin.org
FIRST & FRANKLIN
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Bible gives us permission to strike out in bold faith to discern what it means to live God's way for our time.

How the Bible Actually Works*
Peter Enns

POEM of the Month:

"Unsigned" by Steve Hollaway

They wrote for hire, the psalmists,
members of guilds,
no royalties though royals
sometimes claimed authorship.
These poets are unknown as God

would have it, no other way
could they have spoken to God's face
and not held back, not giving
a damn what the first audience
would think.

How long O Lord?
Why do you stand far off?
Why do you hide yourself?
It is not enemies that taunt me—
it is you. I think of you and moan.

No one dared sign his name but God.
"These are my words for you
to use against me. I know
that you will need to."

Such a gift to weep under the shadow
of her wing, to pound the eagle's breast
with tiny fists, to sing the blues
full-throated in her hearing.

I use the weapon-words placed
in my hand. I sing the verse
an unknown poet and the sometimes-
unknown God put in my mouth.

I wish my own children felt safe
enough to cry out accusations
of my failures, to say I am absent,
whether they believe in me.

I wish I could write desolation
as a song my son could sing to me.
Because I cannot bear such honesty
I will never be as intimate with them
as the defenseless silent God.

PLEDGE CARDS ARE STILL BEING ACCEPTED

We have recorded 32 pledges so far. If you haven't yet pledged, please prayerfully consider doing so. Pledge cards will be available in the Narthex. To access the web form, please click: [Pledge Card](#).

END OF LIFE CARE AND PREPARATION



The Church Office maintains records of members advance directives, including durable powers of attorney for healthcare, and letters stating the preferences of members for music, Biblical texts and other readings, and people to be included in

their memorial services or funerals. Any minister doing a memorial or funeral service appreciates having as much guidance as possible from the person and their family beforehand.

We also have short booklets to help families plan in this area, and direct people to the longer treatment of End of Life issues in a study paper of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/ga-2016-abiding-presence-oct-17.pdf>. This policy was written to address matters of aid-in-dying as well as to affirm a Christian statement of meaning and ends of life.

The existence and value of this kind of preparation was brought home recently when a letter from Thom Ballantine was found outlining texts and music he had written out years ago. In his case, he also specified particular instruments, musicians, and pastors (if available).

Healthcare, including end-of-life care, can be complicated and expensive. Skilled social workers are generally available at hospitals. Hospice can work in both an assisted-living and at-home situations. Please let the Deacons or Pastor know if you would like to go over some of these choices, which benefit from planning how spiritual matters can be taken into account by medical and financial advisors.

All of this presumes that you have a will, updated to reflect any major changes in your family situation. The Church Office has simple models but this is clearly the domain for estate lawyers and the like. At the same time, remembering the list of members who have put the church in their wills, we know that “where there is a will, there is a way” to help First & Franklin care for people for many years to come.

What are all those purple ribbons?

First & Franklin's **Purple Ribbon Project**, which is organized by the Mission & Education Committee, is our prayerful and public response to the violence that afflicts our city. During our service of worship each week, we name the victims of homicide over the previous seven days. The list includes information about the victim, including his or her ethnicity.



While everyone feels the impact of violence, the inclusion of the ethnicity of the victims reminds us all that to be a person of color in America is to be a person at unusual risk. We hope that by hearing and seeing each victim's name, we will move their death beyond being just another number; that by seeing the ribbons we will better understand the magnitude of this problem; that the ribbons will awaken our hearts to the sorrow that has saturated our city; and that seeds will be planted to help us see and respond to the hurts of our city as Jesus has taught us.

Congratulations, Sofia!

What a joyous celebration in the church as we welcomed Sofia Schenk to our community on June 20, 2021 for her baptism. Sofia's parent, Kara and Lee, had planned for the baptism before the Covid pandemic put everything on hold. We were blessed to welcome some of Sofia's cousins and many family members to participate in and witness her special day. As is an old tradition this church, Sofia was presented with a handmade blanket that had been lovingly made by Paula Crews.



Our fabulous fellowship team decorated and prepared a beautiful reception gathering for all in Reid Chapel. Many thanks to all who helped make this such a special day for Sofia and her beautiful family.