



NETWORK NEWS

TIMELY TOPICS FROM ST. ANDREW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FROM THE PASTOR

"We love because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19 (NRSV)

Whenever I have some critical reflection to do, I head for the mountains. A few years ago I spent a week in the Blue Ridge Mountains just down the road from the Presbyterian conference center at Montreat, NC, working on what turned out to be a rather ambitious project to develop a model of best practices for fundraising for use by transitional and interim pastors.



One of the main tasks of the congregation during the time of transition is the mission self-study, out of which comes a clear statement of the church's vision and mission. If we want to invite others to participate in our church's mission and to call a pastoral leader to lead the church into the future, then we need to be clear about what it is we believe God is calling us as a community of faith to be and do, which is why the vision and mission study are so important and why we spend so much time on them. Everything that the church does and for which it strives flows from the vision and mission statements. The church's vision and mission even ought to be reflected in its operating budget.

Presbyterians believe that whatever we do is a response to the grace that we have first received from God. The great spiritual writer Henri Nouwen, said that when we know of God's love, we experience an extraordinary desire to love God back, to say thank you, to

express how much the gift of God's love matters. We love God back by being fruitful with our lives, which is to take all that has been given to us, and to place it at the service of others, of creation, of life itself. It is to demonstrate our love for God by loving all that God loves and attending to whom and what God loves by giving our whole selves in service.

Pope Francis said, "These two criteria are like the pillars of true love: deed, and gift of self. And Mother Teresa spoke about the divine tenacity of love, "I have found the paradox, that if you love until it hurts, there can be no more hurt, only more love." Please think about that.

The starting point is gratitude. Nouwen put it this way, "The central truth of your life – of all of our lives – is to know truly and completely, that God loves you just for being you." The moment we understand that God loves us for who we are, that we don't have to earn God's love, then that is a powerful, transformative moment of grace. And if you have experienced what Henri is speaking about, you know a profound gratitude that permeates your whole being. When you realize just how much God loves you, you want to love God back. And the desire to express that gratitude knows no end. Our giving and our service are expressions of our gratitude for God's amazing love for us. The writer of 1 John sums it up: We love because God first loved us.

Yours in Christ,
Roger



SECOND SUNDAY OFFERING —
AUGUST: SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR
DEVONSHIRE

It is expensive to buy all the supplies needed to start a new school year, and the parents of Devonshire students are often not in a position to get everything their children need. We can help by shopping the August sales and bringing in pencils, tissues, notebook papers, crayons, etc., and leaving them in the marked box in the front hall.



BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS —
AUGUST 19.

Although some children may be looking forward to returning to school more than others, we should all be grateful for the privilege of receiving an education. With that in mind, on Sunday, August 19, we will be having a “Blessing of the Backpacks” during our 10:30 a.m. worship service. Students of all ages and teachers heading back to school are invited to bring their backpacks, brief cases, iPhones, diaper bags, to church for a special time of prayer and blessing.



SUNDAY, AUGUST 26
- SUB BAR AND A SHOW

The Hospitality Team is hosting a **Make-Your-Own Sub** bar following worship on August 26. After lunch you are invited to the Eclipse Theatre for a matinee performance of “**100 Saints You Should Know.**” Father Matthew is a young priest questioning his faith while his mother, Coleen (played by Rev. Phyllis Hefner) has no doubts. This drama explores the difficulties of grasping

and holding onto one’s beliefs in a modern world.

A block of tickets will be available – first come/first serve basis. The group discount is \$15 per person. **Ticket sales will begin on Sunday, August 5 during Fellowship hour.**



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16
- WORSHIP IN THE PARK

Plan now to attend the pancake breakfast followed by worship at Blendon Woods Park. More details will follow.



PRESBYTERY OF SCIOTO VALLEY:
MISSION TRIP – OCTOBER 15-19

The Tenth Anniversary Presbytery-wide Mission Work Team will be going to Webster Springs, WV. Applications and more information will be available at the Presbytery website www.psvonline.org. The cost will be \$350. For those interested in participating in this popular mission ministry of the Presbytery, email Jeannie Harsh at Jeannie@psvonline.org



PRESBYTERIAN OLDER ADULT
MINISTRY NETWORK (POAMN)
REGIONAL CONFERENCE:
OCTOBER 12; 7:30 – 3:30

“The Best of Times: God’s Call in the Third Thirty of Life” will be the theme of this one-day event to be held at Worthington Presbyterian Church. This event will feature an opening keynote, worship, inspiring and thought-provoking workshops, fellowship, and food. Plan now to attend this enjoyable and informative event. See the Presbytery website www.psvonline.org for further details.