

First Presbyterian News

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Theology Matters – Mission of God

Over the past two months I have been preaching on how theology matters; specifically, when it comes to the topic of discipleship. We started with the Great Commission and then walked through the Book of Romans from a 30,000 ft view.

Through this study we have explored how our personal theology of God can influence our walk, and subsequently our witness to the community at large. Everyone has a theology, whether they know it or not. What you think and believe about God is your theology. At this point you may be thinking, "The title of this suggests Missions work, why are we going back to Discipleship?" The Ministry of Reconciliation (2 Cor. 5) and proclaiming the Good News to a lost and broken world IS the Mission of God. We, as the Body of Christ, have the wonderful privilege of being a part of that plan.

I have spoken previously about how we are one body with many parts guided by one Spirit. Therefore, our part in God's mission is clear. It is to spread the love and grace of God to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Wait... how do we do that? Spreading God's love to the ends of the earth sounds very daunting, and the thought can even paralyze us at times. It is perfectly understandable that most people do not even know where to start. Like most things, we start with the right mindset. We need to develop a missional mindset, or a missional heart.

"Pastor, that sounds very abstract. I have no idea what that means." Let me explain. A lot of times when we hear things like "spreading the Gospel," or "evangelism" we get this picture in our minds of two people going door to door trying to convince people to believe in Jesus. Or perhaps the guy standing on the street corner preaching to anyone in earshot. Luckily, that is NOT what I am talking about. Let's think about missionaries for a minute. What do they do, and how do they do it? First, they identify a region in need. Then they learn about the culture, they observe and interact with the people, which results in the missionary identifying a specific need within the region or specific community. Usually, it results in something like digging wells, building schools, or providing education. While all of this work is being done the missionaries are building relationships and trust with the people, so that when they do share the Gospel message it is more likely to be received, but the goal is not to make converts to Christianity, the goal is to love others as God loved us. One of the last lessons Jesus taught the disciples before he went to the cross was to love one another. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love... This is my command: Love each other." (John 15:9, 17; NIV) This is a missional heart!

Here is another way to think about the goal and purpose of missions. I was reading an interesting book recently and it defined Mission like this:

"But at the end of the day, mission is a matter of loyalty. The ambassador must have complete loyalty to the government he or she represents. A trusted messenger will faithfully deliver what his sender said, not his own opinions... The mission of God's people flows from the uniqueness of the God of the Bible, supremely revealed to us in the uniqueness of Christ. That is both the *source* of our mission (for this is the one who sends us into the world in his name), and also the *content* of our mission (for all that we say and do is to bear witness to the truth that the Lord is God and there is no other, that Jesus has been given the Name that is above all

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names, and that there is “no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved²”, Acts 4:12).” (*The Mission of God’s People, A Biblical Theology of the Church’s Mission*; Wright, Christopher J. H., pages 31-32)

So, how does that relate to you and me in our local church? Can we not apply this same missional heart in the community around us? One of the book studies offered a little while ago was a book called *They Like Jesus but not the Church*, by Dan Kimbal, and in this book the author talked a lot about getting out of our church bubbles and seeking out relationships with those who are not in church. The goal, he said, is not to view them as evangelistic target, *but to show them God’s love*. He said, “May we... have the strength and courage to escape the Christian subculture and truly be a church on a mission. May we pray fervently with a missional heart, asking the Spirit of God to move in the lives of those we are befriending.” (Kimball, Dan: *They Like Jesus but Not the Church, Insights from Emerging Generations*. Pg. 253)

Let us change our mindset to a missional mindset and ask the questions:

- * Do I know any non-Christians, or people who do not go to church?
- * Who is around me that needs to feel God’s love?
- * How can I observe and interact with the culture and people around me to identify a specific need? How can we, as the church, help address that need?
- * Are we showing God’s love to those right around us?

Father God, please give us our eyes, your heart, and your burning desire to love your beloved children. Please send the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

In Christ,

Pastor John



“By what power or by what name did you do this?”
Acts 4:7



August 2 – 10th Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: God’s Sovereignty

Scriptures: 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14

August 9 – 11th Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: Guest Speaker

Scriptures:

August 16 – 12th Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: Israel Will Be Saved

Scriptures: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8; Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

August 23 – 13th Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: A Living Sacrifice

Scriptures: Psalm 138; Romans 12:1-8

August 30 – 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: Love in Action

Scriptures: Jeremiah 15:15-21; Romans 12:9-21

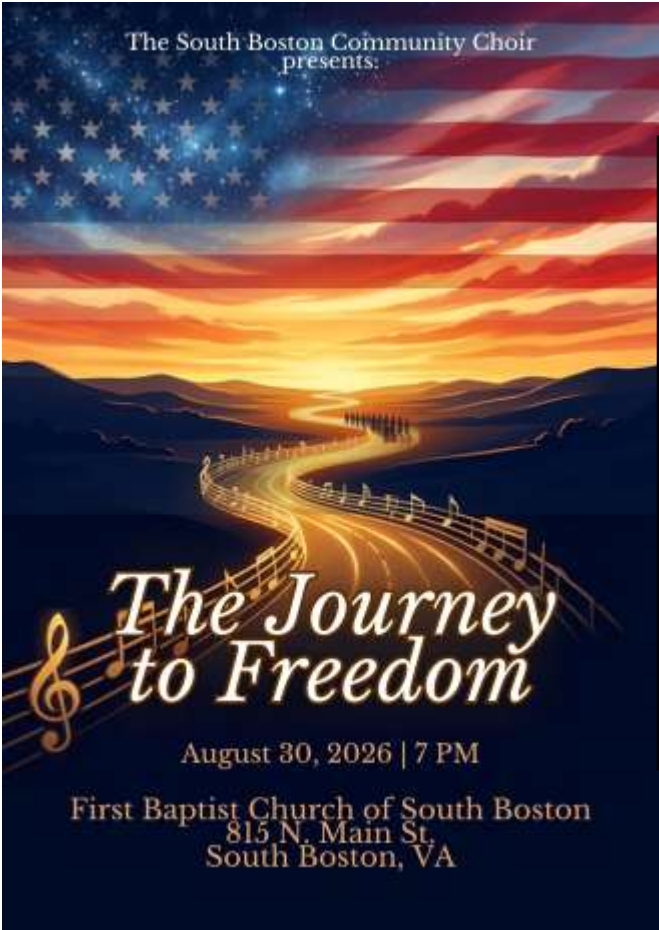
September 6 – 15th Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: Love Fulfills the Law

Scriptures: Ezekiel 33:7-11; Romans 13:8-14

Card Ministry at Commonwealth - The next Card Ministry will be in September. Watch for more information in next newsletter.





Community Concert - At First Baptist -
August 30 at 7 pm

Come and enjoy a concert celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the freedoms we have in Christ! Members from around the community have gathered to present an evening of hymns, anthems, and patriotic songs that highlight man's pilgrimage to find freedom, ultimately found in Christ.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free," Luke 4:18

Wishing all the best for the students as they head back to school !

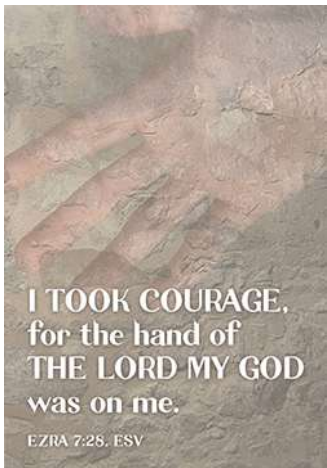


Sandi Hughes’ brother passed suddenly. Betty Plaster had outpatient surgery prayers for speedy healing. Betty’s son-in-law, Jim passed suddenly. Prayers for Betty’s family especially her daughter Susan and the boys, Jacob and Andrew. Del Pool has been sick for several weeks with pneumonia. David Harrell doing well with chemo treatments, after completing radiation. Jacqueline Powell, the matriarch of the Powell family passed away in July. Rick Harrell fell and cut his head, just prior to them leaving for the Poconos. Prayers for an enjoyable vacation. Terence McDonald as he moved to Myrtle Beach. Carol Foster’s son-in-law, Richard was having some health issues. Luedtke had back surgery and was unable to play piano for several weeks. He has recovered and now back. Jean Long was in rehab for a short time for strengthening therapy. Jim Debiec was in the hospital with heart issues. Home now - Prayers for Kathy too. Andy Newland - colon cancer diagnosis, receiving treatment. He and Joann were both in Charlottesville for medical treatment, both now home. Alice Waskey fell and broke 2 ribs. Terri Smith’s mother, Lorena is recovering at home. Ted VanBenschoten receiving immunotherapy. Both Ted and Pat were in rehab to regain strength after a severe illness. Mike Rand’s sister-in-law, Cheryl, was in a serious car accident, slowly recovering. Kit Hooper’s sister, Lena, was also in a serious car accident. Sevanne Gilliam’s brother, Larry’s wife, had a stroke and then passed. Sam Lewis had eyelid surgery.



Take Courage God Is On Our Side

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As I've been teaching youth Sunday School recently, we were studying 1 and 2 Kings.

I found myself seeing so much of today and myself in those words written so long ago.

The stories of the Israelites wanting to have a king and be like the other nations. They turned away from having Jehovah as their God and began combining the beliefs of the other nations with their own. They didn't want to be unique and different from the rest of the world they saw. They didn't appreciate how special they were and how much God was blessing them, even with all the past exceptional blessings of being delivered out of

Egypt, and crossing the Nile on dry ground, having food provided to them daily as they were in the wilderness. So many blessings and yet they thought other nations were better.

How much are we like this today? As I recently watched the World Cup games, and watched reactions of many people, who came from other countries, compliment the wonders of this great nation, how friendly the people are, how patriotic we are and many other examples, then there were others interviewed who didn't think USA was great at all. Imagine the surprise when those people were US citizens. How sad!

This story also reminds me of the story of Elisha and Hezekiah when they said "There be more with us, than with [them]" in 2 Chronicles 32:7-8 we read: "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah"

We have a much stronger power with us as we follow Christ, and trust in Him than the enemy has working against us. As we look on at the world it can look overpowering, and strong, but with faith we know the cause of truth will win.

We have been promised that this country would be great and powerful and never led by a king, or dictatorship, if we keep God as our ultimate leader. But so many are turning their hearts from God and religion. Due to their disobedience, Israel was scattered and exiled. I feel we are heading toward the same destructive behaviors. As we look toward the return of Jesus as the Messiah, Savior, and King, if we can share the love of God with others around us, perhaps we can have an influence on the future. God bless this great country! God bless us to continue to be strong in the midst of opposing forces. ~ *Sherolyn*

Operation Christmas Child Through the Year

During **August** - School supplies. The time for the major push for Operation Christmas Child is quickly approaching. We will have concerted efforts to make sure we have enough supplies to fill each of the 60 boxes. Thank you for all those who have sent in items and in advance for the extra push in the coming months.



Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible Study - September 9 at 10:30 we will begin our study of the book of Revelation. The entire bible is revelation, we will study the final chapter - The Final Revelation that God gives us. The book of Revelation isn't meant to inspire fear - it is meant to reveal Jesus and to strengthen the faith of His people.

Join us for a verse-by-verse Bible study as we explore: The meaning behind Revelation's symbols; God's promises to His people; God's ultimate victory; And Practical lessons for living faithfully today.

Come with your Bible, your questions, and an open heart.

There will be a study guide provided, please contact Wendy Daniel (434-579-2425), so she can ensure that there will be an adequate number of study guides prepares.

Everyone is Welcome!

AUGUST

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
July 26 10:00 am Processional 11:00 am Worship	July 27	July 28	July 29 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	July 30 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	July 31 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	August 1
2 - Communion 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am -Worship	3	4	5 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	6 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	7 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	8
9 9:45 am - Sun School 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship 12:30 pm - Session	10	11	12 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	13 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	14 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	15
16 - 5 Cents a Meal collection 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am -Worship	17	18	19 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	20 7:00 pm - Al-Anon Newletter DEADLINE	21 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	22
23 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship	24	25	26 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	27 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	28 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	29
30 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship	31	Sept 1	Sept 2	Sept 3	Sept 4	Sept 5

2 Meredith Howell
4 Donnell Corelle*
6 Joan Owens*
7 Ann Crabtree
10 Jim Luedtke
10 Drew Morgan
12 Joanna Harrell
12 Caroline Harrell
14 Barbara Johnston*
15 Lisa Howell
17 Wilma Hendley*
19 Sylia Hendley
20 Ronnie Crabtree
23 Wayne Roller
24 Candice Powell
25 Dan Koutsos*
29 Marge Nelson*
29 Sally Slaff
30 Debbie Burton*
30 Moyrah McCarthy
31 Polly Ratcliff*
31 Robin Hall



* In Memory

We want to recognize everyone. If we don't have your birthday listed, please call the office and let us know.



Session Notes: Since our last Newsletter, our Session discussed:

The Session met on Sunday, June 14, 2026.

1. Rev. John McCarthy opened the meeting with prayer.
2. News of the congregation was shared by Pastor John.
3. The minutes of the May 17th Stated Session Meeting were approved.
4. Pastor John reported on the Presbytery Meeting – Thursday, May 21, 2026, at Blacksburg Presbyterian Church.
5. Membership Roll – Dr. Robert Wayne Adams passed away on May 21, 2026, and Jacqueline Paige Powell was baptized on Sunday, May 24th.
6. Worship – Next Communion, Sunday, August 2, 2026.
7. Pastor John will be at the PC(USA) General Assembly meeting in Milwaukee, WI from June 25 thru July 2. Margie Anderson will be the guest speaker for Sunday, June 28th.
8. Budget & Finance – Financial reports for May 2026 were reviewed.
9. The Session discussed a painting quote for the sanctuary from Ricky Whitlow.
10. A Congregational meeting has been called for Sunday, August 16th for the purpose of voting on the potential sale of a parcel of land to Stanley Jeffress and Joel Cunningham.
11. Local Missions – Operation Christmas Child 2026 – June Collection: financial donations in increments of \$10 to offset the shipping costs. Good Samaritan – June Collection: Children’s lunch foods.
12. Stand Firm Youth Revival – Wednesday, June 17 at Constitution Square. Food trucks open at 6pm. Event begins at 7pm. Needed volunteers from the Congregation.
13. The Session discussed getting congregational feedback through a weekly question about our path forward in Growing God’s Presence.
14. Pastor John closed the meeting with prayer.
15. Next meeting will be on Sunday, August 16, 2026, at after the Congregational meeting. No Session meeting in July.



- **Choir** - Wednesday's at 6:00 pm
- **Diaconate** - August 2 at 9:00 am
- **Communion** - Sunday, August 2
- **Congregational Meeting** - Sunday, August 16
- **Card Ministry** - None in August
- **Session** - Sunday, August 16 at 12:30 pm
- **5 Cents-a-meal** - Sunday, August 16

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