



*Our Vision is to be Christ to each other  
and our community— doing  
justice, loving mercy and  
walking humbly with our God.*

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**FACEBOOK LIVE**  
**Bible Study**  
**every Wednesday Night at 6:00pm**

### **Sunday Morning Worship Time**

**every Sunday at 11am online**

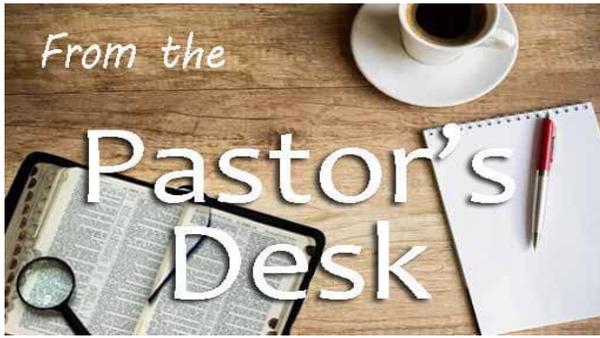
**We will be uploading the video on our [website](#) each Sunday  
and also will be on our Facebook page.**

### **The Choral Corner**

As we approach Ascension Sunday, we prepare for the final acts of Christ on earth, namely his parting blessing to the disciples and his ascension into heaven. The ascension took place on the Mount of Olives, but that visit to the mount was only one of many made by Jesus during his adult life. One of the most important visits was in the final days leading to his crucifixion. Our selection in the Choral Corner this week is from Ludwig van Beethoven's only oratorio, Christ on the Mount of Olives. While Beethoven conceived this work as a "passion" oratorio, dealing mainly with the events of Christ's last week before his death, the final movement is a glorious setting of "Hallelujah," and it is often referred to as Beethoven's "Hallelujah Chorus" (perhaps in homage to his favorite composer, George Frideric Handel). With Beethoven's oratorio ending in such a grandiose way, it is possible that he intended the uplifting final chorus to represent Christ's ascension.

The oratorio was premiered in 1803, which was only one year after penning his famous Heiligenstadt Testament, in which he revealed the fact that he had lost his hearing, a condition he had hid from everyone in his life. He would live another 24 years to compose some of the greatest music the world has ever heard...ironic, knowing that Beethoven himself could not hear it. I hope you enjoy this outstanding performance of Beethoven's "Hallelujah" from Christ on the Mount of Olives, recorded in October of 1990 by Robert Shaw and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NILYBzkXIrc>

**Stafford Turner**



At the last deacons' meeting, the deacons decided to refrain from holding any in-person activities in the church building through at least the end of June. This includes worship services. I wanted to give you some of the information I shared with them that led to this decision.

Our overarching question in discussing when the best time will be to resume in-person activities is, "How do we best love our neighbor?" Meeting together in-person involves a considerable amount of risk, especially to older and vulnerable populations. As followers of Jesus, our thoughts should always be the safety of others before we consider our own desires.

I also reminded us of I Corinthians 10:23-24, "All things are permissible, but not all things are beneficial...Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other." Just because we *can* do something does not always mean we *should*. In the coming days, more businesses will open. More churches will resume in-person services. If we follow the guidelines laid out by the Trump Administration and the CDC, however, these changes are premature. These guidelines indicate we should see a reduced number of cases for two sustained weeks before resuming more normal operations. This is not happening in either the state of South Carolina nor in Spartanburg County.

I am sure you have seen some of the cautionary tales of churches who held services just before social distancing policies were enacted and many people were infected and some died. In addition, several stories have come out recently about churches that resumed in-person worship in the past few weeks and then had to stop again because people in the congregation became sick. I am committed to avoiding that situation at all costs.

Furthermore, when we do resume in-person services, things will not look very much like we expect a worship service to look like. The best science on how COVID-19 is spread indicates that our risk of infection is a function of the amount of our exposure plus the time we are exposed. This means that if you were walking down the street and someone runs past you, you would have a high amount of exposure but only a small amount of time. The runner would be expelling a lot of air, but you would only breathe it in for a few seconds. You would also be outside. Conversely, talking to someone at a regular volume in a small room for 30 minutes has a low level of exposure, but for a long period of time. This is actually a greater risk of infection than the former scenario.

All these factors combine to make attendance at an hour-long church service a particularly risky activity. Singing, in particular, is deemed an extremely high-risk activity because of the deep breathing in and the large amount of air expelled. In order to mitigate (but not eliminate) that risk, we would have to implement the following types of practices if we were to resume in-person services at this time:

Worship services would be limited to 50 people; no older or at-risk people could attend; foot traffic would be limited to one-direction (entering through one door and exiting through another door); restrooms, the nursery, and classrooms would be off-limits; everyone would be required to sanitize their hands upon entering and exiting, everyone would be required

to wear gloves and masks; no communion would be observed; offering plates would not be passed; no choral or congregational singing; hymnals and other objects in pews would be removed; families would sit together scattered throughout the sanctuary; no fellowship of non-family groups would be allowed in the building.

As you can see, a “worship” service under these conditions hardly qualifies (in my opinion) as a worship service at all. In addition, our staff would be stretched thin trying to provide both an in-person worship service and the same quality of online worship experience those who cannot attend have come to expect.

In future articles, I will share some thoughts and ideas I have about other ways in which we might begin, at some future time, to gather as the church for activities that might involve fewer hurdles in planning and lower risk to those attending. But for today, I wanted you to have the full extent of my conversations with deacons and staff that led to our decision to forgo in-person worship for at least the next month.

Please know that in these strange times, my thoughts and prayers continue to be with you daily. I am always available if you need to talk, pray, or have another need. Thank you for continuing to be, in these days, the wonderful church that you have proven yourself to be, over and over again.

***Matt***



## **UPDATED HEALTH & SAFETY NEWS...**

**All in-person activities at Fernwood Baptist Church are cancelled until further notice.** We are also asking that if you are coming to the church to drop off your offering or to pick up something, please know that Angie or Mary Helen will meet you at the door to help you. We are asking that no one enter the building during this time to keep us all healthy and safe. Thanks for understanding in this matter.

### **CURRENT OFFICE HOURS ARE:**

**Monday: 9am until 1pm**

**Wednesday: 9am until 1pm**

## Deacon's Corner

*"To the church of Fernwood in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

*Grace and peace to you. We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." (adapted from I Thessalonians 1:1-3)*

These times are difficult for all of us. Being apart, not being able to hug, fellowship together, or share a meal together, is so unnatural. We are a people of community. However, for the safety of our people and because we do love and care for each of you, the Deacons have voted to continue the suspension of in-person services through the month of June, at least. We are also continuing the suspension of the use of our building at least through June.

We will continue worshiping together virtually through our webpage and Facebook until we feel it is safe to come together in-person. We are watching the progression of this virus through the statistics of our county and our state. The decision to continue keeping our building closed was not an easy decision. But we made the decision on facts, not emotions.

We want to express our thanks to all of those who have worked so hard to allow us to have the weekly worship experiences: to Matt, Stafford, Becky, and Sharami for working each week to present the message in song and word (and for editing the "extras" into the presentation that allow us to fully participate in worship), and Lloyd and Lee Anne for filming and keeping our website updated. We also want to thank each of you who have provided prayers, scripture readings, children's sermons, and special music. We are a blessed church to have so many gifted and willing members to participate. We have reached people, through our virtual worship, whom we may never have reached before. Some of these have reached out to let us know of how our ministry has touched their lives. Thank you for being faithful even during this time of loneliness.

The business of the church, however, must continue. This is the time in our church year when we select new Deacons. Since we cannot safely be together physically, the Deacons have approved the following procedures for a drive through selection of Deacons. This will be just like a drive through pick up for lunch!

On Sunday, June 14, between 10:00 am and 1:00 pm, we ask you to drive to the church, through the carport on the dining hall side, where you will be met by a Deacon. **Please bring a piece of paper with you with the names of your nominees written on it.** The Deacon will be wearing a mask for your protection. You will deposit your ballot in a box to be tabulated at the end of the allotted time by three Deacons, including the Deacon Chair. Remember you will be nominating five Deacons this year. The fifth Deacon selected will fill the remaining two years of Jean Pruet's term. You may nominate five or fewer people, but not more than five. Any ballot with more than five nominees will be eliminated. As the Deacon receives your nominees, your name will be marked on a list of Church members so we are sure we have a valid number of members participating.

We tried to make this process as much like our current procedures as possible. We ask that everyone who wants to submit a nomination ballot come to the church just like you would if we were meeting physically. We have, obviously, extended the time in order to make it simpler to receive the ballots at the drive through. There will be at least two Deacons at the church to receive your ballots during the time allotted.

The three Deacons tabulating the ballots will do so that day at the church. The ballots will then be stored in the office, according to our procedures. Your Deacon Chair will contact the top nominees until five have accepted the positions. You will be notified of those who accept in the next Newsletter or through an email blast.

Prior to this process, Angie will send out a list of active and eligible candidates. An email will be sent to all active and eligible members inquiring whether they would like to be on the active and eligible list. **If you would not like to be considered for nomination, please reply to that email and let us know.** This will ensure that everyone on the list you are choosing from are willing to serve before you nominate them.

These times are stretching our creativity. With your prayers and participation we will get through these unprecedented times. We hope you are enjoying receiving the weekly care calls. I have enjoyed talking to those of you I have called each week. The silver lining in this pandemic is that it has allowed me to get to know many of you that I haven't known well before. I enjoy hearing about how you are navigating these days. Continue to stay in touch, give regularly, and pray for each other. We will meet together again! We will be stronger when we do! May God bless each of you.

**Wendy Case**  
Deacon Chair

## **OUR New Post Office Box**

We have acquired a mailbox at the Main Post Office in Spartanburg.  
Please send all correspondences and contributions to the address listed below.

We will no longer receive regular mail at our physical address.  
Thanks for understanding in this matter.

**Fernwood Baptist Church**  
**P.O. Box 7058**  
**Spartanburg, SC 29304**

(Special note to remember – zip code is different from our physical address,  
so please be sure to change that too.)



## Graduation 2020

We will be recognizing them during  
the morning worship service on Sunday, May 24.

### High School Graduates

#### **Elaine Grace Evans**

Graduating from Veritas Christian Academy in Fletcher, NC.  
She plans to attend Western Carolina University this fall.  
She is Daisy Evans granddaughter.

#### **Harrison W Hartley**

He is graduating from Grayson High School, Grayson GA  
He has been accepted to Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, GA  
He is Gene and Judy Moyer's grandson.

#### **Wallace Chapman**

He is graduating from the Spartanburg Day School.  
He is Steven and Christine Chapman's son.  
Valerie Harley is his grandmother.

### College Graduates

#### **Anna Caroline Capps**

She is graduating from Wofford College  
with a BS degree in Finance.  
She is the granddaughter of Bill and Barbara Bagwell

#### **Katherine Jane Knoblauch**

She is graduating from Liberty University  
with a BS in Entrepreneurship.  
She is the granddaughter of Bill and Barbara Bagwell

#### **Faith Marie Pruett**

She is graduating from Converse College  
with a BA in Art Therapy and a BA. in Psychology.  
She will pursue her Masters of Art Therapy and Counseling  
at George Washington University.  
She is the granddaughter of Drs. Jim and Jean Pruett.



## Family Night Supper Update...

We just wanted to show everyone how your contribution to the Family Night Supper fund is helping Mobile Meals during this pandemic. The first photo from last week is: Roasted Turkey with mashed potatoes and gravy, and green beans with cornbread. The second photo from this week is: Lasagna with mixed steamed vegetables. The third photo is: Chicken Divan Casserole. These meals are frozen overnight and delivered by someone from our church to Mobile Meals the next morning at 8:30am. Instructions are placed on the lids with how to warm up these meals for the individual receiving them. The individual is getting a warmed prepared meal from Mobile Meals on this day and the frozen meal is for the next day.

Thanks in advance for all those who have and are still supporting the "doing mission right here at home" project and helping Mobile Meals. We will continue to collect donations (non-deductible) to help this mission project.



**The Church Office will be closed Monday, May 25 for Memorial Day. The staff wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday.**

**Fernwood Baptist Church**  
**P. O. Box 7058**  
**Spartanburg, SC 29304**

OFFICE HOURS

**Mon - Thurs: 8:30am to 4:30pm**  
**Please call ahead for availability.**  
**(864) 582-7467**

FOOTSTEPS (USPS 456270)  
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**Publication Notice**

The next bi-weekly e-blast newsletter publication will be **Wednesday, June 3, 2020**. Deadline for all articles is **Tuesday, June 2, 2020 at Noon**.

PLEASE NOTE: You may submit your information via email ([angie@fernwoodchurch.org](mailto:angie@fernwoodchurch.org)) or through the church office. Please do not submit any information over the phone. Information submitted after the deadline will not be published until the following issue (no exceptions). Thank you for your understanding!