

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

## **Zoom “Coffee time in the Concourse” every Sunday, from 9:30am until 10am.**

A Zoom link will be sent in our weekly worship email.  
This will be a time for members to see and talk to each other  
having their juice or coffee at home  
before Sunday School begins online at 10am.



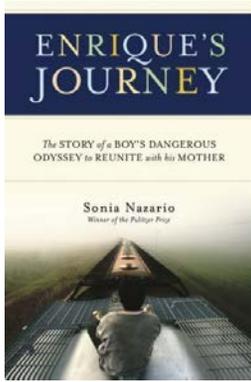
## **Choral Corner**

Next Sunday we will sing another hymn that is a cornerstone of our faith, Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound. The text for this hymn was written by the Englishman John Newton in 1772. Newton spent much of his life in the slave trading business, but he later became a very outspoken abolitionist. It became a very popular hymn in Great Britain, but its greatest fame has been seen in the United States, especially in the South. The musical setting that is most recognized for the hymn was written in 1835 by the American composer William Walker, and it has been estimated that the hymn is sung world-wide over 10 million times each year.

The video link below features the operatic singer Andrea Bocelli singing this beloved hymn on the steps of the Milan Cathedral on Easter Day, April 12, 2020. You will recall that this time was the height of the global lock down over the Corona Virus, and the video shows many of the largest cities in the world as silent and empty. In spite of the void of humankind in the cityscapes, the words of the hymn serve as a reassuring reminder of God’s grace in the face of such trying circumstances.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpXwOSHTwsY>

If you have not already seen it, I would like to recommend a film to you that shares the title of this hymn. The movie Amazing Grace was released in 2006 and depicts the abolitionists’ struggle in Great Britain. After twenty years of work on the issue, the independent Member of Parliament, William Wilberforce helped bring about the end of slavery in that country in 1807. John Newton was a part of that effort, and he died only months after seeing the movement’s victory. The movie features Albert Finney as John Newton and Ioan Gruffud as William Wilberforce.



## Book Group News...

The Fernwood Book Group will reconvene on Tues. April 20, at 7 PM, by ZOOM meeting. The meeting will last until 8-8:30 PM, depending on how the discussion is moving along.

We will be discussing "*Enrique's Journey*" by Sonia Natario. It is a nonfiction book about the immigration issues in our nation and promises to be both an interesting and informative read. Wendy Case will be leading our discussion. The title is available in an Adult and a Youth Edition, and you are welcome to read either edition. for discussion in the group. The study will last for 2 or 3 weeks. Copies are available at Barnes & Noble and Amazon in paperback or ebook editions at a reasonable price.

This is a wonderful time to join our group, and we welcome and encourage new members at any time.

For more info, contact Nancy Easler at [nancyeasler86@gmail.com](mailto:nancyeasler86@gmail.com) or 680-8518.

## Sunday School News...

The work on the Adult Sunday School hall will be completed in approximately one month. All of the things that were in your classes are now either in the concourse or back hall near the Chapel. Please take time to come to the church and identify what needs to be kept. All other stuff will be discarded. Make sure you come when Angie is there and wear your mask. You have approximately one month to complete this task.



Furniture, of course, will be kept. It is the miscellaneous stuff you need to identify. I have copied several of you from the classes that rotate teachers to be sure I cover every class.

You may place the stuff to be kept in the New - Footprints SS Class, *the old Ruth Class*, identified for your SS class.

## NEW Office Hours

**Monday: 9am until 1pm**  
**Tuesday: 9am until 1pm**  
**Wednesday: 9am until 1pm**

***Anyone entering the building MUST have a mask on.***

*To be sure that it is safe and a good time to enter the church, call 864-582-7467 and schedule an appointment.*





## NEWS...

Our Ministry Council held its regular monthly meeting on March 8, 2021.

We've been having all meetings virtually for one year now. Our Council discussed what we have been doing over the past year, and we all agreed that even though we had been meeting virtually, we had been the hands and feet of Jesus to our church family and community during this time.

- Weekly meals continue to be served to Hope Center, and the quarterly meals to St. Luke's Free Medical Clinic have begun. You can still bring grocery items for Total Ministries by the church. Fernwood will be participating in a new ministry which is facilitated by SPIHN. Susan Plemmons will share more details in a future newsletter.
- We continue to have Coffee on the Concourse which is an opportunity for you to socialize with your Fernwood family via Zoom on Sunday mornings at 9:30.
- The Fernwood Labyrinth is still available for meditation during Lent. A virtual Maundy Thursday service will be held followed by a drive by communion. More details are available in this newsletter.
- As the weather gets warmer, more outside fellowship gatherings will be planned. Please watch the newsletter for dates for these events.

Please contact me or the church office if you are looking for a way to serve at Fernwood. As always, it is my pleasure to serve as chair of such a dedicated group.

Thank you.

*Sara Gardner*, Ministry Council Chair

**If you would like a copy of the February Approved Ministry Council Minutes, please call the church office and Angie will print you one.**

## **Family Night Supper Support - Will You Help?**

We are supporting a local mission with meals. The Hope Center for Children are excited and pleased to be receiving these meals. Tina will be preparing larger casserole type meals along with sides. They have 3 residential homes that she will be preparing for. These meals will be hot and fresh and delivered on Wednesday afternoon at 5:30pm at each location.

Are you willing to continue to pay for your meal, but allow it to be served to your neighbors? If you would like to help pay for some meals, you can write "Family Supper" on your check or choose "Family Supper" when you give online. Please give generously and help spread the word to others. Thank you to those of you who continue to support this important ministry!

## Article from a member...

### *Who am I?*

A Reflection by Jim Rentz

My wife, our young son Jamie, my mom, dad, sister and I were camping on the shores of Clark's Hill Reservoir in Georgia shortly before my deployment to Vietnam. We were all sleeping in our family-size tent. It had rained for most of the day, so we decided to eat the evening meal at a nearby fish camp. When we returned and were settling down to go to sleep, Jamie promptly threw up. The odor was ramped up a few notches due to being in such close quarters on such a damp night. I figure that most parents can identify. My, the joys of parenthood!

After the mess was cleaned up and things were quiet, we heard his little innocent voice asking, "Mommy, why did my mouth do that?" Our young son was intrigued with himself. The Creator had instilled an inner wisdom in him that recognized that the food was not good for him and spontaneously expelled it. That innate wisdom was placed there to protect and take care of him though he was not consciously aware that the food needed to be expelled. Jamie is now a medical doctor and has an in- depth understanding of why his mouth did that.

I often have shared Jamie's story with my pastoral counseling clients. Just as the Creator has instilled protective physiological resources in our bodies, he has also instilled similar ones in our psyche [soul]. The writer of the book of Galatians puts it this way in chapter 2 verse 20, "My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives within me." My clients and I search for and try to follow the Christ within them. The "Christ within" has the ultimate knowledge and resources required for their daily living.

The psalmist captures this phenomenon in Psalm 119:105 "Thy word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." This light is more often than not a soft one guiding us along the dark, winding, precarious, and often bewildering pathways of life. I am blessed to be able to join and participate in the Creator's handiwork in action.

The Vision Statement of our church is, "To be Christ to each other and our community – doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with our God." Just as we can choose what to eat in order to nourish our bodies, we can choose to eat that which nourishes our souls. The Creator has seen to it that a kind of "spiritual osmosis" will absorb that nutrient. I am grateful to be a part of a church that nurtures my soul.



### **Homebound Member of the Week**

**Joe Ball**

121 Robin Court  
Spartanburg, SC 29303

## From the Pastor

Monday night, the deacons decided to continue to suspend in person worship for Fernwood through April. I am sure that is as much of a disappointment to you as it is to me. We have been doing this for a year, longer than any of us ever imagined. The prospect of another Easter passing without us being together grieves me.

I do believe, however, that the deacons made the correct decision. Spartanburg Co. continues to have one of the ten highest infection rates in the country. We have sacrificed so much for so long, it doesn't seem wise to put people at risk now, when we are so close to our goal. On the other hand, we believe we are close to opening for in person worship for at least some of our members in the next few months. Hopefully, technological, health, and administrative goals will all converge soon.

To that end, I am sharing an article my mom sent me (thanks, Mom!) that details several questions for churches to discuss as we begin to move towards in person worship. The article, by church health and growth specialist, Karl Vaters, asserts that the question, "Will the congregation come back?" while an obvious concern, is not the most important question we should be asking ourselves. We are discussing two questions per month in both Ministry Council and Deacons meetings. I thought I would share some of that discussion with you.

The article can be found here: <https://karlvaters.com/will-the-congregation-come-back/>

Question #1: "Have we represented Jesus well during the lockdown?"

Everyone agreed that we have done so. The ministries we have started or repurposed during this time have represented Jesus to our community. These include: food for Hope Center for Children, Mobile Meals, and St. Luke's Clinic; the Blessing Tree; our drive by visitation and call lists; and our online worship service.

We have also had an absence of conflict over having or not having in person worship. I know we haven't all agreed with the decision to suspend in person worship for this long, but I respect the mature and Christ-like way we have continued to love each other through this trying time.

Question #2: "Are we representing Jesus well as we come out of lockdown?"

This is a question whose answer is still being formed, but our discussion centered around making sure that the people who have joined us online, especially those out of our area, are able to continue to be full and participating members of the church even once we resume in person activities. How can we continue to empower everyone to worship, belong, serve, and invest when some come in person and some connect online? That's a difficult issue, but one I am committed to solving. And we are all committed to representing Jesus well through that process.

I will continue this discussion in next month's column. In the meantime, if you have any insight or answers to these or any of the questions in the article, I would love to hear from you.



*Matt*  
Senior Pastor

## FROM THE DEACONS BENCH

March 8, 2021

I want to salute the Fernwood congregation for your continued financial support of our church and its ministries. Through February we are exceeding our current ministry plan and I pray that will continue in the months ahead.

Each month, the deacons determine the possibility of resuming in-person worship for the following month. Our decision is to continue virtual worship through April, but there is reason to expect the possibility of some change to that pattern as early as May. In all likelihood, physical presence on Sunday morning would be limited to persons who have been fully vaccinated and completed the two-week waiting period following vaccination. Given the age options now including persons 55 and over, that could encompass a number of our members. No doubt, there will continue to be concerns related to maintaining certain protocol, but I will promise to make you aware when we come to a decision regarding worship in May. Regardless of what we do related to in-person worship, live streaming will continue to make our worship services available to members who are unwilling or unable to be physically present for worship.

The process for developing a new children's playground has begun. The Children's Ministry Team and the Family Ministry Team will be working with the Building and Grounds Committee to develop recommendations for the particular equipment and design features to be included in the playground, which will be a ministry to our congregation as well as to our community.

We are delighted to welcome new members who have joined Fernwood this past week. We look forward to the opportunity to welcome in person all who have joined us during the pandemic once we are able to be together again.

*Gerald Keown*  
Deacon Chair



### Prayers of the People Highlights

March 14-20

Young Baptist

[www.cbf.net/young-baptist](http://www.cbf.net/young-baptist)

### Prayers of the People Highlights

March 21-27

Jade and Shelah Acker

Kampala, Uganda

[www.cbf.net/acker](http://www.cbf.net/acker)

**FERNWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**OPERATING FINANCIAL RESULTS**  
Year-To-Date February 2021

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	Actual Better or (Worse) Than <u>Budget</u>
<b>OPERATING RECEIPTS</b>			
Contributions Received	\$64,629	\$64,333	\$296
Use of Building Receipts	\$150	\$0	\$150
Interest Income	\$20	\$0	\$20
Processing Fees	\$59	\$0	\$59
Other Income	\$196,735	\$0	\$196,735
Transfers	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Operating Receipts	\$261,593	\$64,333	\$197,260
<b>OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b>			
Total Personnel Related	\$27,976	\$30,519	\$2,543
Children / Youth Ministry	\$0	\$308	\$308
Music Ministry	\$277	\$633	\$356
Community Ministry	\$0	\$3,860	\$3,860
Ministry Teams	\$66	\$1,033	\$967
State & World Missions	\$2,592	\$2,573	(\$19)
Operating Ministry	\$15,679	\$25,407	\$9,728
Total Operating Expenditures	\$46,590	\$64,333	\$17,743
<b>OPERATING RECEIPTS MORE(LESS) THAN OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b>			
	\$215,003	\$0	\$215,003

**Facebook Live**  
Wednesday Nights at 6pm

**Adult Bible Study**  
Sundays at 10am online  
taught by Dr. Gerald Keown

**Children's Sunday School Time**  
Sundays at 10am online  
taught by Lee Anne Bailie

**Sunday Morning Worship**  
Sundays at 11am online  
The service will also be uploaded  
to our [website](#) every Sunday.

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

**OFFICE HOURS**

**Mon - Wed: 9am to 1pm**  
**Please call ahead for availability.**  
**(864) 582-7467**

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**Welcome New Members...**

We would like to welcome, **Tally Pruett**, who is recommitting herself to our membership. **Faith Pruett** who is transferring her membership from Church at the Mill in Moore and **Julian Stridiron** who is transferring his membership from First African Methodist Church in Spartanburg. Welcome to the Fernwood family.

**Publication Notice**

The next bi-weekly e-blast newsletter publication will be **Wednesday, March 24, 2021**.  
Deadline for all articles is **Tuesday, March 23, 2021 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!