

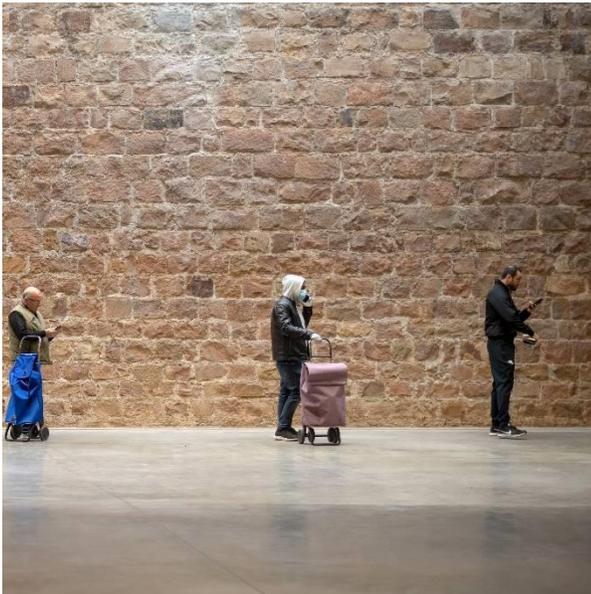


The Williams Bell

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It's been too long. So many churches in Charlotte Presbytery have not met in person for six weeks. In truth, it's all the churches in the Charlotte metropolitan area which haven't met. It's a big deal for Christ followers, young and old. We have this notion that God is there among us, we love being together and embracing. The 17th century philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal wrote, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made know through Jesus Christ." We have this notion that God does that shaping, that something special in us, whenever we gather. The church has gathered in person, regularly, for 2,000 years. People still come. They come when it rains or snows. They come when they don't feel like it. They come on three-day weekends

and national holidays. They come during hunting season, NASCAR season, football and basketball seasons.

This time it is different. It's the pandemic which is the cruelest of seasons. It has cut us off from our fellows. Yes, I am exceedingly grateful for the ability to watch live streaming worship services. They're really good. The pastors preach thought-provoking, biblically-sound sermons and the music is phenomenal.

But it's just not the same. What makes Williams Memorial Presbyterian Church special is our people. I miss the smiles, the occasional hug, optimism and wisdom. I miss Don's teaching, Miss Billie's playing and the choir singing. I miss a God-breathed faith as profound and strong like granite bedrock; and I miss the joy of worshipping with my brothers and sisters. It's been too long.

Yet, God calls us to move forward in faith and to trust him. He reminds us to follow him like Abram and Sarai out of Ur of Chaldees or like the Children of Israel when they followed Moses to the foot of Mount Sinai. We follow Jesus when the Spirit drove him into the Judean hinterland, which led eventually to his betrayal and the cross. We follow Jesus to the tomb and then on Easter morning at dawn to his resurrection.

I would be kidding myself were I to say that when this pandemic passes, everything will go back to just as it was before. It won't. And it shouldn't.

Despite her many flaws, the Church remains Christ's bride. During other pandemics, notably

the Black Death which burned through Europe during mid to late 14th century, the church stood steadfast with the sick and dying. Priests, nuns, and brothers built hospitals, buried the dead, and nursed the few survivors back to health. Most of them died, but they did not “grow weary doing what was right” (Galatians 6:9).

Eventually, lay people rebuilt abandoned cities, and got on with their lives. Interestingly, the remaining population became even more devoted to God.

During subsequent plagues and pandemics, the Church and her people were there. A hundred and fifty years ago, the Christ followers tended to victims of Yellow Fever and Cholera. A hundred years ago, the Christians brought hope and healing to the survivors of the 1918 influenza pandemic. The Church sent out medical missionaries, ordained and lay alike to heal disease across the world. Thirty years ago, it was people of faith who founded the hospice movement and ministered to people dying of AIDS.

I’m not saying that COVID-19 is anything remotely like the Great Plague. It isn’t and will never be. But because this pandemic has wrought so much damage to our society and economy, it serves as a wake-up call for us—especially Christians—to take a different path.

As a church, we must do everything in our power to help a despairing, isolated world to find purpose. We are tasked with bringing Good News. We need to be the lungs of our nation’s spiritual renewal. We need to instill hope and healing and the promise of Christ’s salvation to every church member and everyone who lives along Beatties Ford Road, even to a darkened world begging for light.

It’s been too long, but we shall be together again soon.

Pastor John

Memorials Received:

In Memory of Sara Puckett given by Fleta Windell

In Memory of George R Hudgins & Estela Thomas Hudgins, Johnny Hudgins, Jerry Hudgins, and Ruth Hudgins Reynolds from the youngest Hudgins child raised at Barium Springs House (Women of the Church began in 1891) – Ronnie Hudgins

May Birthdays

May 6	<i>Jon Leatherwood</i>	May 22	<i>Marc Leatherwood</i>
May 10	<i>Jonathan Fisher</i>		

June Birthdays

June 2	<i>Laura Stroupe</i>	June 20	<i>Earl Leatherwood</i>
June 10	<i>Michael Murray</i>	June 25	<i>Jeannie Craig</i>
June 14	<i>Adam Earnhardt</i>	June 26	<i>Mark Auten</i>
		June 27	<i>Jane Setzer</i>

In the event of an emergency or a phone tree request please contact Pastor John, Cell 941-704-0561 or john-nelson.pope@montreat.edu

Prayer Request for:

Members and Friends... *Florence Alexander, Roy Baker, Janet Hubbard, Diane Kever, Nancy & Dickson Skipper, James Watson, and Rev. Phillip Williams.*

Members in the extended community *Lydia Pope.*

Those in military service

US Army –*Sam Caldwell, Justin Jackson* US Army Reserve – *Benjamin Glover*
US Coast Guard – *Matthew Baker*

Volunteers & Helpers for 2020
USHERS

May: John Auten, Laura Stroupe
June: Ty Leatherwood, Ted Auten
August: Lisa Fisher,
October: Alex & Mary Leatherwood
December: Ty Leatherwood, Jon Leatherwood
July: Nancy Lewis,
September: John Auten, Sarah Kiser
November: Marilyn Earnhardt, Ted Auten

COLLECTION TABULATORS

May: Mark Auten, Jon Leatherwood
June: Kevin Auten, Lisa Fisher
August: Don Fisher, Mark Auten
October: John Auten, Amy Auten
December: Don Fisher, Mark Auten
July: Marc Leatherwood, John Auten
September: Nancy Lewis, Kevin Auten
November: Bobbie Reid, Lisa Fisher

COMMUNION SERVERS

May: Mark Auten
June: Nancy Lewis
August: Lisa Fisher
October: Ted Auten
December: Jon Leatherwood
July: Amy Auten
September: Sarah Kiser
November: Fred Hunter

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Williams Memorial Presbyterian Church
4700 Beatties Ford Road
Charlotte, NC 28216-2845



May/June 2020

Phone 704 392-8816

E-mail wmpcsecretary1885@yahoo.com

Sunday Schedule

10:00 am Sunday School

11:00 am Worship Service

Church Staff

John-Nelson Pope – Pastor

Billie McConnell – Music Director

Ted Auten – Custodian

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*Amy Auten – Editor Secretary*

*Wendy Leatherwood – Financial Secretary*