



*Detail of the stained-glass window in First Presbyterian Church's chapel
Sue Callahan, artist*

12 September 2021
16th Sunday after Pentecost

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Established 1817

A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
Building Community ▪ Transforming Lives ▪ Engaging the World

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Summary of the Law

Matthew 22:37-39

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and the first commandment. And a second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

(11am) The Sacrament of Baptism

Anna Pinckney Straight

Salem Elizabeth Avolis

Elder: Kevin Avolis

Parents: Ben and Nicole Avolis

Grandparents: Kevin and Kim Avolis

***Affirmation of Faith**

The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Baptismal Hymn 188

Jesus Loves Me

Warner/Bradbury

Prayer for Illumination

Lesson

Mark 8:27-38

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

The Rev. Dr. Anna Straight

(8:30am) *Affirmation of Faith

The Apostles’ Creed

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Youth Fellowship Kick Off Family Event September 12!

JOY (Just Older Youth) for 6-12th graders and SALT (Serving and Learning Together) for 3-5th graders Kicks Off TODAY Sunday, September 12, 5:30-7:30pm. Families are invited! This event will be all outside so bring a towel and a bathing suit (and maybe a lawn chair) and dinner is included! Contact Marianna (marianna@firstpresnb.org) for more information.

Crop Walk

The First Presbyterian CROP Hunger Walk Team is now forming! Donations will be received in the courtyard after worship each Sunday, starting September 12. Walkers may also register for the walk at that time. The walk is scheduled for Sunday, September 26th. Team turn in/registration begins at 2:00 PM at the gazebo at Union Point Park. The walk steps off at 3:00 PM.

You also may register or donate by visiting the team's website at the address below:

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/team/first-pres-new-bern>

The CROP Hunger Walk is an outreach of Church World Service. 25% of funds raised remain in the community with our hunger partner – Religious Community Services. CWS is active combatting hunger and its causes across the globe. Come walk with us!

Serve at Religious Community Services Soup Kitchen

Members and visitors at First Presbyterian Church New Bern consider whether you might be able to fit in several morning hours, one time, or more than once if it feels right to you, to volunteer at the RCS Soup Kitchen.

For those who are not yet familiar with it, RCS is at 919 George Street, and includes an emergency shelter, a food pantry, a Clothes Closet, and the Soup Kitchen. Our church has actively supported the organization, financially, and through volunteerism, since its inception in 1982.

Our commitment at this time is for a team of five to be in their kitchen from 8:00am-noon, once or twice a month. Our days are the second Monday of each month, and in any month that has a fifth Thursday. During those times, we assist the cook in the preparation of a nourishing meal. This commitment was fulfilled in the past year, by a small group of people of faith, who helped prepare, then pack, the meals "to go". At this point, the meals are still packed to take out. However, as soon as it is deemed safe, the diners will be welcomed back into the relatively new dining room. When that time comes, our teams may need to be larger. We often served 70 to 200 hot meals. If your faith, and your benevolent spirit, lead you to want to try this even once, we'd love to hear from you. Contact Prudence Wing, Volunteer Coordinator from First Pres New Bern to RCS, 1-207-457-5535

House Churches

Every year in September/October the House Churches of First Presbyterian begin to meet again. This is a long-standing ministry of the church, and it is a wonderful way to connect with old and new friends in the church. If you have not been attending a house church, we hope that you will consider it!

Here is how House Churches work: Groups of around 10-25 people meet monthly for good food and faith-full conversation. Some House Churches are hosted in different homes each month and some meet in the same place -- at the church (in the Session House or in the Fellowship Café), or at a restaurant or local gathering place. House Churches meet for around an hour and a half to two hours. There are currently 13 House Churches (and there is always the possibility of new house churches forming). They meet on different weeks of the month, different days of the week, and at different times during the day.

If you would be interested in joining an existing House Church (or maybe trying a different House Church to meet new people), please contact Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org). Don't miss out on this opportunity for a delightful time, where new friends are made, and existing friendships are deepened!

Join the Choir

We always have a place for new singers in each choir, so please consider joining us. The experience will enrich your own worship, and you will be giving a gift to God that only you can give.

If you have questions, contact Pat Rowlett Tuesdays or Thursdays at the church office (252-637-3270) or email pat@firstpresnb.org.

Daybreak Choir: open to Sr. high youth and adults. 8:30 service starting Sept. 9

Sanctuary Choir: open to Sr. high youth and adults. 11:00 service starting Sept. 9

Resurrection Singers: youth and adults, 1 Sunday/month
Rehearse 1st & 2nd Thursdays, 5:15 pm. Choir Room
Sept. 16 (Contact Susan Mabie if you are interested,
252-638-4773.)

Education

Sunday School classes meet Sundays 9:40-10:40am starting on September 12th!

Starting September 12, the Nursery will be open at 9:30am.

Sunday School for Children

Children and Teachers are asked to wear masks in the classroom.

Preschool – Ministry Center room 1.24 (God Loves Me – 52 story books)

Kindergarten-5th Grade – Ministry Center room 1.27 (Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living)

Middle & High School – Ministry Center room 2.23-24 (Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living)

Sunday School for Adults

TheoEd Talks/Jim Copland and Beth Paul – Ministry Center room 2.21 (large center classroom on the second floor of the Ministry Center)

This new Sunday School offering is a place to land for parents of youngsters, young couples, and young adults. It will be a place to develop friendships, share about this unique stage of life we are in, and delve into some thought-provoking discussions about topics of faith. Each week we will view a TheoEd talk (think a TED talk on a topic of faith) with a discussion to follow. To learn more about TheoEd talks visit <https://theoed.com/watch>. For questions contact Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org).

Getting Involved with God: Wrestling with the strange and sacred Scripture of the Old Testament/Maren Sonstegard-Spray – Session House Main Room

We began this class in January of 2020 and had to pause because of COVID. We will return to our study of the Old Testament with a lot of review of what we covered already! If you have ever struggled with the reading and understanding the Old Testament, or if you have ever wondered how the Old Testament relates to the New Testament, come join us. We will be guided by Ellen Davis's book "Getting Involved with God" and John Goldingay's book "Do We Need the New Testament," among others. No need to buy a book (unless you want to!). Bring your favorite translation of the Bible with you.

The Present Word/George Evans – Session House Parlor

The class is studying the series "The Present Word class: Call in the New Testament." Please contact George Evans (gkevans4@gmail.com) with questions. The book is available in the church office.

Church Membership Class/Anna Straight – Ministry Center Conference Room (in the Staff Office Suite)

Whether you have been worshipping with First Presbyterian for one Sunday or one hundred, we'd welcome the opportunity to talk with you about what it means to be a part of a church community-what it might mean for you to take the joyful, faithful step of becoming a member of First Presbyterian Church.

To help facilitate these conversations we have scheduled classes to be held on **September 12 and 19** during the Sunday School hour with the opportunity to join and be welcomed in worship on the 19th (at 11:00) or the 26th (at 8:30).

If these dates don't work for you, please get in touch with Anna so we can add you to the list for the next time we have these gatherings or so we can meet and find a pathway and timeline that works for you (anna@firstpresnb.org or 252-637-3270).

Mid-Week Formation Opportunities

Monday Evening Women's Bible Study starting back Monday, September 13

The group will meet on Mondays from 7:00-8:30pm, starting with a hybrid arrangement – those comfortable meeting in person at the Ministry Center conference room, and those not yet comfortable attending online via Zoom at the same time. Join us as we accompany Amy-Jill Levine, one of our favorite authors and teachers, and author of “The Difficult Words of Jesus,” as she guides us through that struggle to a place of greater understanding of what it is that our Lord is requesting of us. For more information, call Wendy Moeller 252-876-7259 or Marice Debruhl 252-637-5468 or Cathy Wingfield 828-767-0975.

Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study starting back Thursday, September 16

Our Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study meets 10-11am by Zoom. We meet weekly and we are going to read together "The Difficult Words of Jesus" by Amy-Jill Levine. The book is available for purchase on Amazon (kindle version also available). If you need help acquiring the book or want to be added to the email list for the class, please contact Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org).

Sunday Afternoon Men's Beer and Theology led by Ken Wilkins at Brewery 99 (1014 Pollock St) at 4pm on Sunday, September 19. This will be a causal men's gathering for fellowship and conversation around topics of theology and faith.

Life of Prayer: The Practice of Contemplative Living

Beginning Wednesday, September 15, noon-1pm led by Lloyd Griffith and meets in Ministry Center room 2.21 and by Zoom in a hybrid format to begin the fall. The group will be studying “Soul Force” by Lloyd Griffith and “Immortal Diamond” by Richard Rohr.

Wednesday Evening Contemplative Worship

Beginning Wednesday, September 15, 5-5:30pm led by Lloyd Griffith and meets in the Chapel in the Ministry Center. This contemplative, or reflective, approach to worship is offered each Wednesday from 5 to 5:30 pm in the Chapel. This quiet service is focused on silence, prayer and reflection on the Biblical text chosen for preaching the coming Sunday. The Lord’s Supper is observed on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Come when you can and bring a friend.

Grief Support

Grief Support will resume on Tuesday, September 14 at noon in the Chapel. This group voluntarily provides its members who have lost a loved one with hope and understanding, as well as support and guidance as we navigate together through this murkiest of times. The group members provide lessons learned, helpful hints, or just a listening ear because they have experienced the same kind of hurt and pain that others simply can’t understand. This group is a vessel where we grow from receiving support to feel called to provide that support to others who are in this transition. We hope you can join us. Bring your lunch or snack if you choose. Call the church office for more information.

Presbyterian Women’s Circles

Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary - Matthew names these women for a reason. How might Jesus have heard the stories of his grandmothers? What might the young Jesus have felt as he heard about his family? What might the stories of these women have added to his sense of identity, as part of a particular family in a particular time and place?

Our small group Circles will be studying “What My Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women in Matthew’s Genealogy of Jesus” by Merryl Blair. Circles will begin meeting in September so look on the church website under Presbyterian Women for meeting times: firstpresnb.org/pres-women

Welcoming Tip of the Month

Our church has a large campus with a number of buildings, and people approach the center of the campus from several different directions. This can be confusing for anyone who isn’t familiar with the buildings. We are working on improving signage so that directions are easier to understand, but sometimes YOU can lend a hand. If you see people looking puzzled, ask if you can help. If they are receptive, then lead, don’t tell. It’s easy enough to walk with them toward their destination--plus you have another brief opportunity to connect!

First Presbyterian Church identifies itself as a welcoming community of faith and intends to be an inclusive place of spiritual growth for all people. The Welcoming Committee over the months will be offering you tips to strengthen the hospitality of our congregation.

Nametags

As more of the congregation is returning to worship in person after not seeing one another in quite a while AND to help Anna become acquainted with the congregation, we want to encourage everyone to get in the habit of wearing your nametags again! If you have misplaced yours, Marcy, our Office Administrator, is happy to make you another one (marcy@firstpresnb.org). There is a board in the Narthex where you can leave your nametag at the end of the service, and it will be waiting for you the next Sunday.

Notes:

Trusting that God's grace embraces and makes covenant with all believers, First Presbyterian Church intends to be an inclusive place of spiritual growth for all people. All persons are welcomed into this fellowship and membership regardless of age, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic or racial identity, economic or educational status, or political affiliation.