



JULY 2016

# SHARON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWS

## The Fabric of our Land

### ON MY MIND, ROB BLUMER

As we commemorate the quest for American Independence, it's worth a brief reflection on the Presbyterian role in that earth-changing epic. There are many, many references to the Presbyterian role in the Revolution. This year I'll let two persons of that time inform us.

Captain Johann Heinrichs, a Hessian in the employ of Great Britain, wrote to a friend back home in Germany: "call this war, dearest friend, by whatsoever name you may, only call it not an American Revolution, it is nothing more nor less than an Irish-Scotch Presbyterian Rebellion." (January 18, 1778 - from Extracts from the Letter Book of Captain Johann Heinrichs of

the Hessian Jaeger Corps, 1778-1780).

Andrew Hammond, British commander of the HMS Roebuck, in harbor just after the Declaration of Independence had been signed: "[I]t is the Presbyterians that have brought about this revolt, and aim at getting the government of America into their hands." (Hammond Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville).

Many Presbyterian concepts are woven into the first fabric of our land. To capture just the visceral essence of the "enemies" quoted above: Presbyterians are suspicious of the rule of a single sovereign, a single human being - like all human beings - "prone to evil and slothful in doing good." (Westminster

Confession). Even our name, "Presbyterian," tells us so. It comes from a biblical word that means "to hold council." That is, we gather to sift out mere personal desires and to discern the desires of Christ, pursuing Christ's desires rather than our own.

Isn't it interesting that at our country's founding, a group of persons most concerned about the flaws afflicting every individual regardless of birth or rank, should anchor the founding of our country - a country more concerned about individual rights and personal well-being than any country ever to exist in human history?

**BRING A FRIEND**

**Christmas in July**

*Sunday, July 17 at 10:30am service*



Enjoy the peace of Christmas without the chaos. Afterwards, you might hear carolers and even see some "snow!" Bring your spare change for the Salvation Army Christmas Kettle.

Sharon's Favorite Christmas Carols: **VOTE NOW** for our congregation's favorite Christmas Carols! Go to [www.sharonpcusa.org](http://www.sharonpcusa.org) to vote! We will sing our favorites at the Christmas in July service.

**The Well Gatherings**

*Thursday, July 14 at 7:00pm: 7615 Colony Rd.  
(ICSM's new location)*



Well Gatherings are monthly meetings for caregivers, family members, and church leaders who provide care and advocacy for individuals navigating mental illness. The Well offers a place to work through faith questions, reduce the veil of isolation, and find support within the body of Christ. To learn more or register, please visit ICSM's website, [www.InChristSupportingMinistries.org](http://www.InChristSupportingMinistries.org), or contact Rev. Sarah Kromer or Melissa Harding at 704-554-2490.

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# Chaos-Free Christmas – in July

My husband has a quirky habit. As long as I have known him, he gets out the Christmas CDs around July. I have made fun of him mercilessly, thinking he's the only one who joneses for the Christmas chill in the summer haze.

But now I am forced to issue the rare "I was wrong" apology, because Christmas in July is becoming "a thing," and he was apparently just ahead of his time. Especially in the Carolinas, where we begin seeing those gorgeous pine trees grow at the same time that we are picking strawberries, tomatoes, and squash.

We often lament how hard it is to keep Christ the focus of Christmas every year, amongst the bustle of parties and Santa pictures. So, I offer here some chaos-free opportunities to embrace the giving spirit throughout July with a few unexpected gifts:

1. Take flowers to a nursing home or nursing station at a local hospital. The nurse or caregivers will know who needs them most.
2. Invite someone you know over for dinner. Pick a specific night or two and ask today.

3. Put an anonymous note of encouragement in someone's mailbox, or a sticky note on a windshield, or in the pages of a library book.

4. Take the hotel shampoos and soaps to the church for the homeless shelters.

5. Leave a waiter or waitress an unexpectedly generous tip.

6. Bring a water bottle to construction workers, police on detail, or anyone working outside.

7. Drop off a game at a homeless shelter, a coloring book to the pediatric wing of a hospital, a stuffed animal to the police/fire department to calm frightened children.

8. Make a thank you card for your mail carrier or trash/recycle workers.

9. Smile all day - to make someone else's day, rather than because you're having a good one.

10. Compliment a stranger.

# Nothing Too Big

“Be careful what you pray for!” joked John Nowaczewski, who graduated from Union Presbyterian Seminary’s Charlotte Campus on June 11, 2016. John shared that his wife, Carolyn, had been praying for John’s spiritual life from the time they got married 25 years ago.

While in worship one Sunday, Dr. Rob Blumer was preaching on the Great Commission and John found himself in tears, feeling a profound sense of call. He shared that experience with Dee Smart, which led him to audit a course that Merwyn Johnson was teaching and confirmed God was indeed calling him to seminary.

John was at a transition point in his life and career, having just closed a restaurant in the middle of a recession that he and Carolyn had opened. He enrolled in Union Presbyterian Seminary, and then began a new job at Bank of America. “The workload was huge. There were times Carolyn and I wondered if I

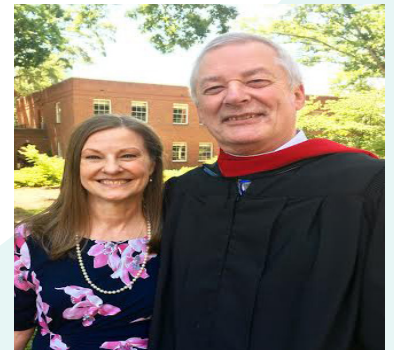
would be able to finish it,” says John. However, God is faithful, and John participated in a spirited and joyous graduation ceremony in our sanctuary.

In his course of study, and through his internships at Mulberry Presbyterian and at Sharon Towers, John has discovered his spiritual gifts of outreach, preaching, and pastoral care. His internships helped him move from his classroom studies to the real world.

John’s next step is the ordination exams, required by the Presbyterian’s Committee on Preparation for Ministry. John hopes to be called to a medium-sized church in which he can shepherd a congregation full-time as an ordained teaching elder and function much in the manner of someone doing “improv.” People doing “improv” know their role on stage, but they do not have a set script. In the church, they rely heavily on the Spirit for guidance and unscripted creativity as pastors

and churches seek new and engaging ways to share the good news of Jesus Christ in an ever-changing world.

John wishes to thank this congregation for its support of him and his call to ministry, both spiritually and financially. The lesson John shares with us: “If you feel God is calling you to something new, but think it is beyond you, remember that you do not go alone.” As John joyfully proclaimed, “God will see it through to the end!”



# The Importance of Fun



**Martin Pruitt will lead youth at Montreat Worship & Music Conferences,**

**June 19-25 & June 26-July 1**

“Everything can be fun” is an attitude that has expanded the Sha-

ron Presbyterian Youth group (SPY) exponentially since Martin Pruitt became Youth Director several years ago. And this summer, the annual Montreat Worship and Music conference takes notice as well. This conference is for anyone participating in music within the church and is attended mainly by lay people: choir members, handbell

players, guitarists. The focus is on ways to enhance music as part of the worship experience, participating in worship and study, as well as music classes and even performance ensembles.

With about 500 youth participants, Martin was asked two years ago to

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**SPOTLIGHT**

# Seeking Out a Smiling Face

“As a kid, fellowship was every week alongside the Sunday service. It’s just what we did,” says Gregory Lynn Clodfelter, who was instrumental in expanding our Lemonade on the Lawn summer fellowship several years ago.

Maria Harvey, this year’s organizer, remembers when her boys, now age 19 and 17, were young. “When we joined the church, they were 3 and 1. This was a chance for them to be kids, running around and basically eating cookies for lunch. It let us be adults, socializing and having adult conversation.”

Those who organize it feel that it’s more than a cup of lemonade. For when people meet others, they open up opportunities to do things together, form relationships, deepen the bond with the church, and strengthen their spiritual lives. “It’s not unusual for the pastor to tap me on the shoulder and point out a new face. I am happy to introduce myself and offer up a class or activity I think they might enjoy. Usually (husband) Trey has to drag me away when it’s time to go,” laughs Gregory Lynn.

“With our first tiny baby, Bill and I began attending a church and

went to the fellowship hour with the intention of meeting people in our new neighborhood,” remembers Rebecka Nelli. “This is exactly how we met the other new parents, and subsequently formed the most meaningful Bible study we’ve ever attended. Babysitter relief, Bible study, and new parent bonding all started with the fellowship hour.”

A relaxed atmosphere where you can seek a new face or one you haven’t seen for a while, and finding out what might be happening that interests you. And, of course, a cup of lemonade to savor.

## Play Ball

What’s heartwarming unique about this picture? Sharon friendships developing over a softball diamond? Not only does Sharon have a team, but we even have a team shirt! All of this is neat, but my eye spied Keith Mason playing softball with his two boys, Cal and Max. And judging from the look on Jim Knepp’s son face, another Father and Son team may be just around the corner.

Sharon Presbyterian became a member of the South Charlotte Church softball league 10 years ago, starting with seven players. The league supports up to 32 teams divided into 4 divisions; from beginner to competitive. Today, Sharon consistently pools from a group of 20

players of all age brackets (16 – 60+). We have a mid-level team and a co-ed team, so there is a place for every adult! From June through August, games are played Monday and Friday on different ball fields.

It’s hard to resist a good game of softball in the summer. Bringing together the family and the church family – on that same ball field – is the stuff that memories and relationships are made of.

### Join the fan club

Enjoy a game or two on Sharon’s own softball field. Bring a lawn chair and settle down to cheer on the team. For more information contact the church office at 704-553-0869.

### Home game schedule:

Fri July 8 7:15 vs. St. Luke Catholic  
 Mon July 11 6:15 vs. St. Giles Presb  
 Fri July 15 7:15 vs. South Meck Presb  
 Fri July 22 6:15 vs. Sharon Methodist  
 Mon July 25 7:15 vs. St. Luke Catholic  
 Fri July 29 6:15 vs. St. Gabe Catholic



# Kids Spotlight: Morgan Greene-Haines

*"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."* – Frederick Buechner

Morgan Green-Haines is a rising 3rd grader here at Sharon Presbyterian who already knows the wisdom of Buechner's words. While involved in many activities, Morgan has a very special place in her heart for animals. She enjoys the comfort and companionship they bring to everyday life. She has two dogs, a cat, a fish, a Guinea pig, and a snake; and she has dreamed of becoming a veterinarian since she was in pre-K.

An accomplished horseback rider, she recently won the Equitation Award and 3rd Place All Around at the Leg Up Equestrian Horseback Show this past May.

Perhaps most importantly, however, is her deep sensitivity and compassion for animals. Says her mom, Alicia, "Morgan is the first to help pets in need. Any time she sees signs for lost pets, she immediately offers to help." Morgan has also begun volunteering with the Humane Society.

Morgan reminds us that following your 'gladness' can also lead to

a place where God can use you to minister to the world's most vulnerable. This summer, spend some time nurturing the gifts and activities that bring you joy. You may just find yourself helping others in the process!



## Expand Your World

Trips are vital in the development of experiences and relationships in our youth ministry. This summer, we invite you to expand your world with us.

### **2016 High School Mission Trip - New Orleans, July 10-16.**

Following Hurricane Katrina when families began to get FEMA relief money, thousands of "contractors" flooded into the city to claim work. Lacking oversight in the midst of chaos, in many instances "repairs" were as minimal as covering up rotting floors with linoleum - homes remain unlivable 11 years later.

Project Homecoming developed out of the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Agency to address the persistent need that still exists. Its goal is to help families return home and revitalize the neighborhoods

that make New Orleans such a special place.

Sharon high schoolers will be doing real repairs and restorations, primarily for older residents. They will stay in "Volunteer Village," and be guided by program staff through a week of fellowship, intentional community, worship, and productive service to a community in need.

### **2016 Middle School Mission Trip - Myrtle Beach, August 7-12.**

Believe it or not, Horry County (Myrtle Beach) is one of the poorest counties in our land region. Primarily older, residents don't have the means or ability to maintain the integrity of their homes.

Each summer First Presbyterian Church of Myrtle Beach offers mission teams from churches across the United States the opportunity to

work on disaster relief, in the Racepath community, and in the Habitat for Humanity community of Hopes Crossing, providing assistance to families with home improvement.

### **2016 High School Retreat - Montreat Youth Conference: Spread the Love, July 24-30.**

"Carve out a week for fun, for faith development, for lasting friendships." A typical day at Montreat is filled with 1300 teens enjoying great speakers, worship full of upbeat music and praise, food, small group discussions, rock hopping, and fun. Sharon has an awesome house only 50 yards from the main auditorium. There is plenty of room for everyone, LOTS of FOOD, and all of the fun we have come to expect.

Contact Martin Pruitt at [martin@sharonpcusa.org](mailto:martin@sharonpcusa.org) for more details.

# Done Willingly

Sergeant Joe Gill, a long-time member of Sharon Pres, flew 86 reconnaissance missions in WWII out of Belgium. Joe had only one serious mishap: an engine failure. As the plane took a nose dive, his parachute strap caught on the tail of the aircraft. In the air, he had to crawl back into the plane to unhook it. It was a lesson that went into the air-force rule book: before bailing out, the pilot turns the aircraft upside down to avoid the tail. Jack Lemon, another long time attendee at Sharon, was shot out of the air in Germany. He parachuted down, but landed in a field of angry farmers with pitchforks. German officers actually saved his life. He was a prisoner for 18 months.

How did I hear these stories? Because Robert Cottom has a passion for planes, travel, talking... and listening. Robert has been flying planes since he was 14 years old, enlisted in the Air Force during the Korean conflict, and spent his civilian career traveling as a sales rep. Currently, Robert volunteers at the Caroli-

nas Aviation Museum. "Yesterday I saw people from L.A., Greenville, and China. I ask where someone is from, and usually I can name a good restaurant there, and a conversation begins," smiles Robert.



As a Shepherd at Sharon, he also listens to older members who are no longer able to get out easily. "I enjoy hearing their stories. You get to experience their life." He has brought several members to museum exhibits that brought back meaningful moments for them. Robert and Jean, his wife who sings in Sharon's choir, have started bible studies, served meals, and chaired on every committee at Sharon. "At this age, I stick to the spiritual work." When asked

why he has been so committed to church work, a talkative Robert states it simply: "Because I love the Lord."

He started in church at 4 years old. He remembers the Christmas programs and summer church camps. "My dad was an elder at a young 23... It was a foregone conclusion that I would be active in the church." Robert and Jean have been at Sharon 48 years. "Every time I would visit Charlotte, I would notice this church's beautiful setting. So when we moved here, I already had it in mind."

They have passed on their spiritual commitment and his interest in aviation and baseball to their two sons (one is a pilot, the other a baseball coach). If you spend any time with either of them, you can't help but catch that positive, flying spirit as well. Robert's favorite quote explains the smile I always see on his face: "Nothing is troublesome done willingly." – Thomas Jefferson

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### KEEP THE LAMP BURNING

We may vacation, but our church does not. Worship, serving human need, and nurture of our church family continue throughout the summer months. Your ministry continues, too. Please remember our church with your volunteer time, and in your prayers and pledges, even when you are away for a Sunday or three.

### GROWING TO SERVE INFORMATION SESSION

Monday, July 25th at 4:00pm in the City View Room of Sharon Towers. Attention Sharon Towers, Southminster and The Cypress residents, Eloise Rushforth and the Growing to Serve Leadership team are hosting an information session for neighbors and friends. Enjoy light refreshments and hear all the exciting plans for our campus. Transportation will be available. Contact the church office for more details at 704-553-0869.

*Continued from page 3: The Importance of Fun*

lead the Bible study portion of that group's experience. And he noticed a gap compared to other youth-specific Montreat events. With a group of youth so focused on music and worship, he saw an opportunity to add more teen fun.

Martin began to incorporate those bonding experiences into the youth's free time, and the conference took notice. As a result, a new role, Recreation and Worship Leader for Youth, was created specifically for Martin at this year's conference. He is responsible for making sure the youth are getting everything they need out of their experience – from music education to spiritual strengthening – to the lasting bonds created by bonfires, capture the flag, and barn dances.

"As a teen, I spent all my fun time at church, and summers at church camps. It became my passion to make sure others have that important experience," says Martin. And the friendships are just as important to Martin and Sharon as they are to camp attendees. "The connections I make turn into a hive-mind of peers that provide new ideas, help solve issues, and even offer church partnerships across the country."

Martin has a knack for making worship relevant to youth. His energy and creativity, even his critical handyman skills, make him ideal for keeping Sharon's youth engaged. Sharon's Youth Director role includes programming like Sunday School, Sunday nights, retreats, and trips, as well as assisting the Teaching Committee in the broader Christian education. His approach is to ensure the teens are making strong connections and to tailor Bible study to what's going on in their lives.

This summer, we are excited that the Montreat Music and Worship conference gets to enjoy the Martin we see every week at Sharon.

## CONGRATS

**KATE ROGERS** was a medalist at the NC State AAU Gymnastics Southern Regional Championship.

**AUDRA NELSON** was inducted into the National Junior Honor Society at South Charlotte Middle School.

## IN OUR PRAYERS

**Please remember in prayer:** **in the hospital:** Charles Lockwood; **those at home:** Max Rollins (Pavilion at Brightmore), Frank Black Jr., Sarah Ross, Earl Ferguson, Romelia Mosack, Jim Bjorneboe, Chris Price, and our **homebound members;** **additional concerns:** Bentley Thomas Watson (Grace Hogan's nephew); Jeremy and Luta Garbat-Welch (PCUSA Missions in Malawi); Presbytery of Huanta in Peru; Rusty Edmondson and Sara Armstrong (PCUSA Missions in Peru). The prayer list is reset on the second Monday of each month. To submit or resubmit a prayer request, please contact the church office at [office@sharonpcusa.org](mailto:office@sharonpcusa.org). By request, concerns may remain private and names will not be published.

### SYMPATHIES:

Leigh Hawkins in the death of his father, James Stimson "Stimp" Hawkins

## CELEBRATIONS



### NEW MEMBERS

Walter & Katherine Hart

### ITS A BOY

Luke Austin Kriener, born June 4th to Kevin and Katie Kriener, and 3-year old brother Jackson.

### WEDDINGS

Christopher David Campbell and Caroline Allen Campbell, June 11, 2016.





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## MUSIC APPRECIATION AND GRADUATION SUNDAY 2016



MORNING SONG AND YOUTH ENSEMBLE



BLANKET CEREMONY 2016



MUSIC CELEBRATION



2016 GRADUATES



ADULT CHOIR



CHILDRENS CHOIR