



SHARON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWS

JUNE 2016

A Summer S. O. S ON MY MIND, ROB BLUMER

Late in the summer a couple of years ago, one of my church friends expressed a concern to one of our staff members saying, “You know, I haven’t seen Rob around here all summer.”

When I heard it, I took a quick look at both my vacation schedule and his worship attendance during the season and laughed out loud: The only two Sundays I had been absent, were the only two Sundays he had been in town and at worship. It remains a running joke between us.

Although our mobile congregation goes hither and yon all the year through, summer still holds the title, “Vacation Season.” What it means is that while the congregation is much harder to keep up with, our church staff is

still trying to keep up with you. If we don’t notice your absence from worship or church sponsored activities or committee meetings, it’s because we’re assuming that you are baking on a beach or hiking in the mountains or visiting the in-laws.

During Vacation Season, help us, the staff, help you. If illnesses or family distresses keep you from active participation in church, or if you come to know of church friends that are struggling, please let a member of our staff know, otherwise we’re likely to think that you are recreating at some distant locale. Enjoy Vacation Season. Take time for self and family. Re-create. And remember your church in your prayers and your tithes; and, when in town, with your participation and service.

Construction Zone from the Growing to Serve Campaign



Recently, the sanctuary chancel was modified to increase usable space for the choir and for instrumentalists. This modification was a targeted goal of the Growing to Serve Campaign and made possible by an anonymous gift of \$99,000, a portion of which also paid for upgrades in sound equipment in both the chapel and sanctuary.

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BRING A FRIEND

Lemonade on the Lawn

June – August, following the 10:30am service



Please sign up to set up, host, and clean up each week. It is simple and easy. All the instructions are on the SPC Website Homepage and the rewards come with all the smiles and words of thanks from guests and members, young and old, as they sip some cool lemonade, enjoy some delicious cookies, and get to know on another in Christian fellowship. To sign up to help, go to www.sharonpcusa.org or call the church office.

Bad Girls of the Bible

Wednesdays at 9:30am, beginning June 22, in the Gathering Room (behind the Chapel)



The Wednesday morning Women's Bible Study's next study begins Wednesday June 22nd. With her trademark humor and encouragement, through her book and DVD, Higgs brings to life the stories of ten "bad girls" in the Bible and teaches how to avoid their mistakes and embrace grace. This 10-week member-facilitated study goes until August 24. New participants are warmly welcomed.

Shameless Summer

by Rebecka Nelli

You show up at church every week, sing, hear the sermon, and place money in the offering plate. Yet recently, you feel as if you're just going through the motions.

You might silently be relieved to take a break from the Sunday routine, service meetings, and Bible groups. At most churches, summer attendance crashes. Services become limited; committees take a break. There is no need for shame.

Summer is a chance to do special things: visit old friends, vacation in a new environment, explore special activities. We can get away and think differently. This is valuable in our spiritual life as well.

When any group is centered on Christ, nurtured by meaningful relationships, and dedicated to God's mission - this is church. So enjoy a fresh source of church this summer.

Rest. Taking time away from routines may make you long for them again when you return.

Study and learn in a new way. One season, my family read a Bible chapter each night over dinner. We discussed what we liked and

didn't understand, made up a few inside jokes, and got to know new wisdom.

Reconnect relationships. Build in family time. Reinstall date night. Go on that first date you never got around to. Seek special moments and be fully present in them.

Play. Learn to have fun again. Enjoy a card game. Throw the Frisbee. Do something different and special. Summer time offers great adventure.

See with new eyes. Nature provides a wealth of opportunity to experience God's work. Close your eyes and listen to the waves. Look at the wings of a butterfly. Smell that barbecue. His abundance is all around us.

Try a new worship experience. Get fresh ideas, new viewpoints, a broadened perspective. Participate in a different church, worship style, or denomination.

Summer is our chance to cease - stop to rest, to listen to God and to our own souls - to come back fresh and renewed for the path God has for us.

Horizons Sunday School by Terry Dawson

The Sunday School movement started in 1780, and soon “Sunday Schools” became the place where our nation’s children learned to read. Children and adults still attend “Sunday School”, but we learn exclusively about the Bible and our Faith.

It’s a happy coincidence that one of the benefits of attending a Sunday school class is the chance to build relationships with others in your church – hard to do during just the worship hour.

Some members of the Horizons Sunday School class have been friends since 1983 when the class was first formed. New members feel welcomed by the empty nester “life stage” of the class.

Coffee is available, usually a snack, and lessons have varied from speakers of different religions, guest Presbyterian Ministers, representatives from Samaritan Counseling, or lessons taught by class volunteers.

Phyllis Acton, long time

participant, is animated when describing the current teacher, David Stanford. “He works hard, the classes are informative, usually include a DVD offering along with his lecture - it’s a good class.”

Participation does slow during our Charlotte summers when everyone seems to leave for either the beach or the mountains. “But”, Phyllis says with a smile, “we never have problems with attendance during our yearly Christmas party!”

While other classes take a break for the summer, several years ago Horizons decided that the class would meet during the summer regardless. This June-July, Horizons will conduct an informal and informative study of David and Solomon, so join any time, and you will fit right in.



Appreciating Music by David Tang

Music has always played a significant role throughout the history of Christ’s Church. The Last Supper ended with a hymn; Martin Luther said that “next to Scripture, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure”; and some of the greatest musical compositions of all time also serve as some of the greatest spiritual expressions of Christ’s saving work.

The six music ministries at Sharon Presbyterian – Children’s Choir, Youth Ensemble, Spirit Ringers, Morning Song Music Team, Vocal Ensemble, and Chancel Choir – are dedicated to making music in Christ, music that enhances worship and that serves God as well as those who



listen. Week in, week out, over forty musicians rehearse and give our very best to God. All of Sharon Presbyterian’s music staff feel blessed to work together in our united effort to feed the spiritual lives of our musicians, encourage Sharon’s congregation, and to minister to the greater Charlotte community.

Music also plays an active role in Sharon’s mission to **Invite All**

Seekers, Teach the Gospel and **Serve Human Need** by presenting special concerts that draw seekers of all colors, cultures, and creeds to our campus, many for the first time. On Sunday, June 5th, all of Sharon Presbyterian Church’s musicians will join together with each other and over thirty guests in exciting new ways, made possible by the newly renovated Sanctuary chancel. Be sure to save the date. Following the service, congregation and musicians alike are invited to a covered dish luncheon in the gym to thank God for the divine gift of music.

SPOTLIGHT

Welcome Khris Wigington by Rebecka Nelli



The best description for Khris Wigington may be eclectic. He likes to travel, do remodel work on his home, and cook. Khris holds a Culinary Arts degree from Cape Fear Community College, “just for fun.”

If you ask Khris if he knows how to do something, his likely response is, “I have dabbled in that.” Know anything about IT? “A little.” Play an

instrument? “Drums.” Got any pets? “Two dogs, a cat, and a few other feathered and furry friends.” Khris says this is because as a kid, “scouting was everything for me.”

This evolved well into his career, which boils down to being given a problem and the latitude to solve it. The perfect résumé for a church sexton. His last role was maintaining foreclosure properties, where he met Bill Mathers. So when Khris asked Bill for a business reference, Bill and his colleague Susan Visbeck (whose great-great-grandfather laid the cornerstone of Sharon’s Chapel) led Khris straight to Sharon’s Sexton position.

A modern church sexton maintains facilities, but according to Khris, the term sexton derives from the Latin “sacristanus,” meaning “custodian of sacred objects.” Sex-

tons of yore maintained relics and other sacred articles as well as the church graveyard; they also rang the steeple bells. In addition, they made sure that the deceased were truly dead by strolling the church graveyard at night, listening for bells that had been tied to the dearly departed. Needless to say, Khris is grateful that patrolling Sharon’s graveyard is not part of his job description.

Khris is from Mayodan, N.C. His parents are still in Mayodan, and his in-laws are in Charlotte. He met his wife living in Wilmington, and they eventually moved here to be nearer to family.

Khris, what do you want the church to know about you? “Just thank you for such a gracious welcome. So many of you have introduced yourselves and gone out of your way to make me feel at home.”

Smile - You’re on YouTube! by David Tang

Recently, Sharon received a small anonymous gift to help create a video ministry. Many churches spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to produce video and have highly trained operators; Sharon had neither.

After careful assessment, the ad hoc AV-IT committee decided to purchase Apple iOS devices – iPads and iPhones – as

well as other tripods and other necessary accessories. Movies and commercials are being filmed on iPhones, so why not the life of a church? When connected by Wi-Fi and video streaming applications, these iOS devices can mimic a multi-camera TV studio and stream live video to YouTube. Beta tests of the system have been ongoing and

a number of videos have been posted on our new YouTube channel (search “Sharon Presbyterian Church” and remember to subscribe!).

Beginning this Summer, viewers will be able to watch live streams of our worship services, archives of those services and special events. The budding video ministry will also post weekly video logs (or

vlogs) – short previews by our pastors of their upcoming sermons. So **SMILE SHARON** - you’re on



VBS Volunteer by David Tang

“Volunteering at VBS is easy and fun,” says Robin Shealy of her past experience at Sharon Presbyterian’s Vacation Bible School. “The time commitment is just a few hours a day [and it] is a great way to get to know the wonderful children that are so vital-ly important to the life of our church.” Robin is not alone in her enthusiasm for supporting Sharon’s Vacation Bible School as a volunteer leader. Dozens of adults AND TEENS(!) are needed each year to help guide, teach and nurture the nearly 200 VBS participants every summer. This year will be no exception as Sharon Church presents **Cave Quest: Following Jesus, the Light of the World.**

- 8:45am:** Arrive and begin to receive children.
- 9:15am:** Sing and Play Rock (“what fun!” says Shealy).
- 9:45am-12:25pm:** Guide children through Cave

Quest stations like *Deep Bible Quests, Spelunker Sports, KidVid Cinema and Cavern Café.*

According to this year’s Sharon VBS coordinator Sarah Brewer: “This year, we’ll need “Cave Crew Leaders” (ages 18 and up) and “Assistant Cave Crew Leaders” (under 18) to guide and teach. No experience is necessary.” Volunteer Ann Cannon adds, “It’s a well-organized program. There’s not much skill involved other than liking children and being kind and patient with them.” Volunteers can help out for one morning or all five. Shealy adds: “I would encourage everyone to give a few hours to VBS. It’s really fun to spend a week singing and playing with the children and learning about God’s love.”

For more information and to sign up, go to www.sharonpcusa.org

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“We haven’t been members here for as long as many,” said the donor, “but when the campaign was kicked off, and knowing the components, we stepped forward to show our early support. We’re confident that the church’s mission can be furthered by this plan and we’re delighted to participate.”

What’s Happening

2016 Confirmands

SPC has another great group of confirmands who were recently examined by the session and will be confirmed on May 15th. This year’s



group ranges from youth who have been part of our church their whole lives to those who have recently become involved and we’re excited to welcome them all as new members. During the year, they participated in SPC’s outreach ministries to homeless people, participated in the confirmation class, discussed and wrote about their faith, learned memory work, visited other churches, met with mentors and asked challenging questions. Watch for this talented group of musicians, singers, athletes, artists and volunteers as they find ways to serve as our newest members of the congregation.

SPY/Youth CONGRATULATIONS

- Nick Tutwiler, NCMEA Western Region State Honors Orchestra, Violin
- Patrick Dillard, NCMEA Western Region State Honors Orchestra, Cello
- Kacey Liang, solo performer, Harding High School April Alumni Luncheon
- Morgan Greene-Haines, NC AAU State Gymnastics Championship medalist

Playground Players Invade Sharon

This summer, Sharon’s campus will host two camps that introduce elementary and middle school kids to the joy of performing on stage. Kids will learn choreography, stage presence, team work, self-confidence, and vocal technique. The only pre-requisite is a desire to learn; Erica McGee, founder and director of Playground Players, has a gift for finding the right role for every child. **Classic Rock** camp June 20-24; **Star Wars: The Musical** camp Aug 8-12. Visit www.creativesoutherntheater.com for details.

Fix the Fixers: How to Care

by Rebecka Nelli

Miriam Wilson walked into the apartment of Gerry Little at the Regency with Catherine Deal and Jenny Dawson, ready for a fun game. This meant a great deal more than just an afternoon of bridge to Gerry.

Gerry's eyesight had been failing for years, and her ability to get out had become quite limited. Her favorite hobby and social outlet had been lost to her. But Miriam, a Shepherd at Sharon, had lovingly listened to Gerry, and found a way to fill that gap.

Sharon's Shepherds team tries to make sure that members who have become isolated have someone that reaches out to them. One of the spiritual gifts referenced in the Bible is that of the Shepherd: to care for the personal needs of others by nurturing and mending life issues.

Most of us, at one time or another, have found ourselves in a position to support a family member or friend through a difficult time, whether due to illness, loss, job, divorce, or other personal concern.

The Shepherds group provides training several times a year to give tips on how to help those in need. This past month, the training focused on one key theme: listening.

Ron Nelson, pastor and guide, mentioned that "one of the most powerful gifts we can give people is to be fully present." Sometimes the best thing we can do is sit with people in their story and empathize and let them know that we care, that the church cares and that God cares.

SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICE

God's Hand

by Rebecka Nelli

You know it's "mission accomplished" when you head off on a mission trip with one plan, and discover "God has a greater one in mind," says Carol Howie, who attended the North Carolina Mission Trip this past May. Twelve members of Sharon traveled to Bryson City for a 3-day adult mission trip with two projects to accomplish. First, putting the final touches on a three-year project turning a run-down emptied church into a vibrant coffeehouse and Christian meeting space for college students in the heart of campus.

But the second project fell apart. Fuzzy plans turned into details that didn't fit the team's skills. With only days before they arrived, there were no tasks prepared to support a dozen eager workers.

Then the SAFE Shelter came

along. The Swain/Qualla SAFE shelter provides emergency shelter for families, counseling and a food bank for victims of domestic violence. It consists of one main house with bedrooms, an office and a welcoming space, plus three cabins



for families that need a temporary place until they can get back on their feet. But much of it has become unusable. A water pipe had burst over the winter, the outdoor space was unsafe, and one cabin door

lock was so damaged it could not be opened at all.

The executive director of SAFE did not know that we were coming until just before our arrival. She quickly swung into action, providing John Harvey, Sharon's team coordinator, with a prioritized list of their needs, which were many. The team repaired a rickety handicap ramp, replaced damaged doors and old locksets, removed a dilapidated wire fence, pressure washed, cleaned and repaired gutters, and even did electric work.

"The hours were long, the heat was terrible, and the gnats were swarming. But the work was satisfying," says Amanda Buchanan, first time participant. Amanda's group took an overgrown and unsafe fire exit space, made stepping stones

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ANNOUNCEMENT

LIVING SAINT by Ron Nelson

“The oldest rat in the barn,” is how Eloise Rushforth described herself several years ago as she spoke in favor of a plan to renovate the church’s old sanctuary. With a sharp mind, a playful sense of humor, and ongoing energy, Eloise has always played a significant role at Sharon; she sang in the church choir for 40 years and gave generously to the Esther Brown Fund in memory of Esther and in support of the church’s music programs. She also established the Eloise Rushforth Mission Fund for outreach programs and mission opportunities beyond the local church. Both endowments continue to enrich the life of the church today.

Eloise was one of the first women in Sharon Church to be ordained as an elder; she served on two Pastor Nominating Committees, as Clerk of Session and is a Shepherd for homebound members and Sharon Towers’ residents. On May 10th, Eloise received the **Charlotte Presbytery’s 2016 Outstanding Older Adult Award** and in October she will celebrate her 100th birthday!

We at Sharon Church call her a living saint, reminding us that no one is too young or too old to eagerly serve the kingdom of God. Eloise, with overflowing love and bounteous joy, we, your fellow church members and staff, give thanks to God for your faithful example. She recently said, “I have always been willing to do whatever needs to be done at the church.” Truer words were never spoken.



IN OUR PRAYERS

Please remember in prayer: those at home: Bernice McCullough, Rebecca Foard, Sybil Starnes, Virginia Kenyon (Rehab at Sharon Towers), Candy Lee, John Nowaczewski, Jim Bjerneboe (Brian Center Rehab), Chris Price, and *our homebound members*; additional concerns: Charles Meacham (Nina Sumner’s father); Martin Gonzalez (Letty Latta’s friend); 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, contact the church office at office@sharonpcusa.org. By request, concerns may remain private and names will not be published.

SYMPATHIES:

Annice W. Fisher, sister of Marvin Ward

CELEBRATIONS

GRADUATIONS: John Nowaczewski, Union Presbyterian Seminary. John invites the Sharon congregation to attend: June 11th at 10am in our sanctuary!

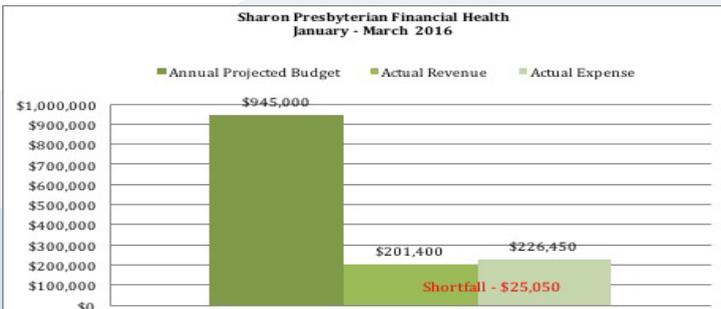
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out of a tree trunk, and turned it into a garden haven for children to play and adults to relax.

But the look of gratitude on the executive director’s face made it all worth it. The team was treated to an enormous lunch made by an employee nearby. She expressed her thanks with pots of mac and cheese, country fried steak, green beans, home grown corn and strawberry cobbler. There was enough left over to feed the entire team another dinner.

Mission trips can often be chaotic, and planning is important. But this year’s trip showed that all our human planning just doesn’t come close to God’s perfect planning. He put us in the right place at the right time to make a difference in their lives, and ours.

BUDGET





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DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS:

MONDAY JUNE 13, 2016
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Rev. Ron Nelson, Associate Pastor
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Khris Wigington, Church Sexton

Beth Merchant, Director of Weekday School
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THE CHURCH SCENE



2016 CONFIRMANDS



HAVING FUN WITH MUSIC



FEEDING THE HOMELESS



LYRA VOCAL ENSEMBLE GROUP



WESTERN NC MISSION TRIP



MORNING SONG TEAM