

APC Connections

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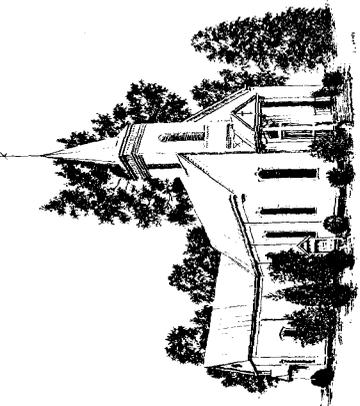
February 2020

Pastor
Rev. Kerra English

Admin. Assistant
Susan Vitale

Director of Music
Karla Bloom

Organist
Austin Wachsmuth



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ASHLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

401 Virginia Street
Ashland, VA 23005

Upcoming Events

- Feb. 9—Session, 12:15 PM
- Feb. 11—11 AM PW Circle
- Feb. 26—6:30 PM Service for the Imposition of Ashes
- Mar. 1—9:30 AM Lenten Lecture Series begins; Communion



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Pastor's Page

Sabbatical Leave is an extension of the Biblical concept of renewal through the Sabbath day and Sabbath year. The model for Sabbatical Leave is Jesus Christ, who took time to be in prayer away from his own community of disciples on the mountain, on the road, and out on the water. Sabbatical Leave is a time of "...holy leisure, leisure that is for holy things, leisure that makes the human more human by engaging the heart and broadening the vision and stretching the soul." Sabbatical Leave is "...a time to receive, to be nurtured, to dig deeper into yourself, your relationship with God and your own roots and stories, so that you can be renewed, refreshed, and revitalized by the breath of God."
(From the Presbytery of the James Sabbatical Leave Guidelines)

Friends – about my Sabbatical,

I am very grateful for how this congregation has been caring for me over the past almost 8 years now. You have blessed me with grace. You have encouraged me with kind words. You have supported me in prayer. I am honored to be your pastor.

It is true though that pastors get tired and need rest. The emotional energy that is devoted to this profession is not unlike the emotional energy of being a parent – even when you are not “on,” you are still “on.” The job may be done for the day, but carrying the role is 24-7. That is true for even part-time pastors like me. I’m never *not* your pastor, though there are times when I am not doing work at a specific moment. So, it is with heartfelt gratitude that I say thank you to the Session for being open to the possibility when I suggested that the Summer of 2020 would

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be a good time for me to take a Sabbatical.

Recognizing that this congregation is not easily equipped to take on the cost, nor are we eligible for some of the programs geared toward helping full-time installed pastors, we have structured my time away to be over the typically least busy time in our church calendar – the Summer – when Sunday School and choir both take a break, and a less busy schedule benefits just about everyone. This also means that hiring a replacement for me does not have to be at the same number of hours that it would be at other times during the year. It also means that I am combining what would typically be my 4 weeks of vacation and study leave time into that time frame to make it simpler to account for this year.

As we have moved forward on setting this up, a friend and colleague, The Rev. Nicole Childress Ball has accepted the offer to be my summer replacement. Nicole has been a hospital chaplain, and most recently a church relations officer for Union Presbyterian Seminary. She has supply preached here in my absence before – and knows Ashland well as a Randolph-Macon College alumnus. I'm sure you will be welcoming of her husband Tyler, her daughter Stella, and twins Wyatt and Waylon to worship on occasion as well.

During my absence from June 15 through August 30, she will take on not just my job but my role so I can fully let that go for a period of time. That means that she will conduct all worship services, all pastoral care, and any administrative business that comes up during that time. I have asked her to let me know if someone is seriously ill or if there is a death so that I can reach out to you with a phone call as beloved friends, but it will be her job to be your Pastor through those life circumstances. I will be removing my Facebook profile over that period so that I don't have to be responsive to social media – and that's ALL social media not just church friends. I'm not sure yet whether that instills in me a sense of nervous withdrawal or delighted relief. That remains to be seen!

You may wonder what I have planned for that time. I'm not sure about everything yet, but the one "bucket list" item for me is to attend a seminar at Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu, New Mexico. I've never been to the desert South West and I'm looking forward to being there, and doing some sight-seeing around Albuquerque and Santa Fe. I will take Ryleigh with me mid-July and attend a conference on Writing and Meditation while she attends the youth program for the week. I'm also super-excited about doing a sunset horseback ride through the landscapes that inspired Georgia O'Keeffe. I expect to be inspired, and come back renewed.

Thank you, all of you, for this gift of time. There will be a reminder letter that goes out closer to June that will have all the information you need to know about the transfer that will happen between me and Nicole that will happen in June.

Peace, Pastor Kerra

Usher and Greeter Schedule

	GREETERS	USHERS	COMMUNION ELDERS	COMMUNION PREP & CLEANUP	LITURGIST	FLOWERS
2/02/20	M. Jones, C. Sthreshley	R. Cole, M. Summerson	S. & M. Carneal, M. Jones, M. Summerson	K. Basilio, S. Carneal	Jay Morgan	
2/09/20	M. Summerson	K. Basilio, P. Shinnamon	<i>REMEMBER, If you cannot serve, please find a replacement and leave a message on the office phone, 798-5543.</i>			
2/16/20	J. Tate	R. Cole, C. Sthreshley			Jay Morgan	
2/23/20	S. Vitale	R. English, C. Phillips, J. & M. Raymond				
03/01/20	J. Winegardner	B. Mathes, P. Shinnamon	T. Blair, C. Schutte, B. Shea, J. Tate	S. Carneal, K. Pugh	Jay Morgan	

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As well as ALL of the above support, your monetary gifts and donations of non-perishable food items to our pantry helped at least 33 different families throughout the year, and provided holiday (Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas) food bags and gift cards to 9 — 13 different families. Thank you for your generous giving spirit!



Happy Birthday: February

- 3 Drew Moncol
- 6 Karen Cole
- 9 Terry Blair

Congratulations to our organist Austin Wachsmuth on his acceptance into Union Presbyterian Seminary. Austin will be entering their Christian Education program.



Our Deepest Christian Sympathy to: ♦ Randolph-Macon student Sam Wiersberg in the death of her brother Spenser Wiersberg on Sunday, January 12. Cards can be sent to Sam Wiersberg, 4825 Campground Road, Salisbury, Maryland, 21801.
♦ The Shea Family in the death of Beverly's mother, Marjorie Stiles, who was 101, on January.

The Light of Christ

Out of the utter blackness in the vulnerability of the dark where fear exists, God spoke, "Let there be Light – piercing, slicing, through the impenetrable veil. Radiant, luminous, dispelling the utter blackness

Out of the blinding radiance born of God's love – life-giving love – God created all things, seen and unseen. God rejoiced, and rested!

In the vulnerability of the dark where fear exists – in the hearts, minds, souls of humanity – the utter blackness prevailed. But God so loved the world he sent his only son – a babe, vulnerable, born of God's love – life-giving love, come down from heaven – heralded by angels.

"Fear not! HE will give light to those who sit in darkness, in the shadow of death, and guide their feet to the way of peace." The heavens and earth rejoiced at the babe resting in peace. In the vulnerability of the dark where fear exists – despair, strife, grief, intolerance – broken, beaten, scarred, Light – piercing, slicing through the impenetrable veil. Radiant, luminous, dispelling the utter blackness.

Out of the blinding radiance born of Christ's love – life-giving love: hope, peace, joy – arms outstretched, wounds visible, A voice: "Fear not! I AM with you." A soul, bathed in the light,

rejoiced, and found peace!

We, All, Each, have huddled within the shadows of the utter blackness in the vulnerability of the dark where fear exits. Be the light – Christ's light – arms outstretched, wounds visible, dispelling fears; So those who sit in darkness may know God's love – life-giving love –

— Susan Vitale

*This year Pastor Kerra asked for volunteers to write the Advent Candle-lighting messages so they came directly from the congregation in order for us to learn each other's stories and favorite Advent texts and themes. The above was written for our Christmas Eve Service. Many thanks to those who provided inspirational thoughts on Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love each Sunday of Advent .



Mark Your Calendars!



PW Circle

The Circle will meet on Tuesday, February 11 at 11 am in the Church parlor. Ginger Young will lead us in Lesson 6-- Words of Love: Hold Your Marriages Sacred. Please join us. Bring a sandwich and cookies to pack for delivery. Dessert and water will be provided. —Debbie Moncol



Service for the Imposition of Ashes Wednesday, February 26 at 6:30 p.m.

Upcoming Events for



Adult Class Lenten Speaker Series

Our Lenten Speaker Series will be the Sundays of Lent (March 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29) at 9:30 a.m. We will hear from Dr. Tim Brown and students (Cade and Nate) about the Japan trip for Randolph Macon College. March 8 & 15, Dr. Richard Voelz, professor of preaching and worship at Union Presbyterian Seminary will walk us through the themes and practices of worship during the Lenten season. March 22 and 29, Intern Jay Morgan will speak to us on Pastoral Care.

Baked Potato Lunch Sunday, March 15

Join us following worship for a baked potato luncheon hosted by Congregational Care. Watch you bulletins and March newsletter for more details!



Food Baskets for Easter!

We will be delivering Easter Food Baskets to neighbors in need! This year, we are collecting specific foods on each of the 5 Sundays in Lent. Watch for more details!



Session Sound Bites: December 2019 and January 2020

The following is an overview of our December 8th Session meeting;

- ◆ Ashland Presbyterian currently has 74 active members on our church roll.
- ◆ The Session reviewed the Property & Casualty Insurance in place for 2020.
- ◆ Kerra led the Session in a discussion about the Hope, Peace, Love, Joy and Light of Advent.
- ◆ A discussion was held regarding possible pulpit supply for the period of Kerra's vacation and Sabbatical leave. More to come on this topic in the near future.
- ◆ The Annual Congregational Meeting of Ashland Presbyterian Church will be held at the end of worship service on January 26, 2020.
- ◆ Communion dates for 2020 will include the first Sunday of each month and on Maundy Thursday.
- ◆ Congregational Care Committee will host a Potato Bar fellowship event on March 15.
- ◆ The church's year-to-date financial surplus through November is \$5,590; however, outreach payments approximating that amount will be paid in December.
- ◆ Following the recent Stewardship campaign, the Stewardship committee forecasts that giving for 2020 will be 12% lower than 2019. This will be discussed in greater detail at the Congregational Meeting.
- ◆ The next stated session meeting will be held on January 12, 2020.

Overview of our January 12 Session meeting;

- ◆ The Session welcomed and approved Karen Matsushima as a new member who is transferring from Covenant Presbyterian Church in Woodbridge, VA.
- ◆ Roger Cole was elected Clerk of Session for 2020.
- ◆ Session is reviewing the possible purchase/lease of a new office computer and copier/printer.
- ◆ Session approved the 2020 budget with a forecast deficit for the year of \$22,501.
- ◆ Our December 2019 year-to-date financial surplus was \$2,959 compared to a budgeted deficit of \$20,581.
- ◆ The Nominating Committee forwarded the nomination of Wendy Rainey and Sheila Henderson to fill the ruling elder openings for the term ending in 2022.
- ◆ Session met with Reverend Nicole Ball and approved her to fill our pulpit during Kerra's sabbatical leave from June 14 to August 30.
- ◆ The next stated session meeting will be held on February 9, 2020.

Feel free to contact any Session member for clarification on any of the above items.

—Roger Cole, Clerk of Session

Outreach Update for 2019

The Outreach committee is in charge of remitting PCUSA Special Offerings to Presbytery of the James as well as disseminating budget funds to locally supported non-profits, and support for Presbyterian missionaries and their related work. In 2019 we sent to Presbytery of the James for Special Offerings:

Five Cents-A-Meal Offering	\$1,227.01
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$1,696.00
Peacemaking Offering (75%)	\$1,584.00
Christmas Joy Offering	\$1,699.00
Pentecost Offering (60%)	\$1,677.00

And, for Mission Support and related work, we sent \$500.00 each to The

Sthreshley's, Cindy Correll, Ruth Brown, and the Congo (Sthreshley's). \$500 was also sent to IMCK (Kasai Christian Medical Institute in the Congo).

In addition to the above, we supported the following local non-profits:

YMCA Summer Camp Program (40% of Pentecost Offering)	\$1,118.00
CARITAS	\$410.35
ACES	\$500.00
St. James the Less Free Clinic	\$500.00
Circles-Ashland	\$300.00
Hanover Safe Place (25% of Peacemaking Offering)	\$528.00

2020 APC Budget

Income:

General Funds	\$ 92,425
Account Interest	\$ 2,200
Miscellaneous Income	<u>2,700</u>
Total Income	\$ 97,325

Expenses:

Minister salaries & Allowances, Intern	\$ 44,225
Utilities & Maintenance	\$ 16,263
Worship	\$ 1,700
Christian Education	\$ 3,800
Congregational Care	\$ 900
Outreach	\$ 6,700
Benevolences	\$ 2,950
Administration/Salaries Secretary, Dir. Of Music, Accompanists, Janitorial, Bookkeeper, etc.	\$ 37,888
Office Expenses	\$ 4,250
Stewardship/Finance	<u>\$ 150</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 119,827

Budget Difference:

	(\$22,502)
SonaBank Balance 12/31/2019	\$ 153,092

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