

11 COLLEGE PARK collage

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For more information & sermons,
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Immediately following worship on Sunday, March 4, everyone is invited to a simple **lunch of soup and sandwiches in the Fellowship Hall. Afterwards, we'll sample all the bake-off entries.** All are welcome!

Rules for entry:

- Anyone 5 years old or older can enter (non-members are welcome).
- The entries should be ready for judging by 11:30 am on Sun. March 4.
- All entries should be a dessert of some variety.
- **You may use a boxed cake mix, but don't cheat. (Cheating would be buying an already-made cake.)**
- Each entry costs \$5 to pay for the snappy awards.
- As always, three impartial judges will judge all desserts. Bribes are accepted & appreciated.

Categories

- Don't let the kids see this one
- Delicious but I'm only eating one
- Most Crunchy
- Vegan California
- Like Grandma used to make
- Expanding the definition of edible
- Coolest use of candy
- Most colorful
- Most lemony
- Most calories in one bite
- Clearly just thrown together this morning before church
- Half Baked
- So good it will make you hit your Mama
- Bought at the store
- Best use of marshmallow
- Possibly not legal
- Empty the Liquor cabinet
- Fresh & Minty
- Engineering Marvel (Best presentation)
- Not so pretty but delicious
- Most exotic ingredients.
- Discomfort by chocolate
- Totally Nuts
- Peanut Butter Lover
- Most fruits on one plate
- Team Spirit (Best team cake)
- **Served in Vallhalla's Buffet**
- Choking Hazard
- Most Historical
- Most Musical
- Most Mythological
- Judges' Award
- Best of Show

February Events:

- Weekly:
Mondays—Thursdays
Narcotics Anonymous, Noon—Chapel
- Mondays
Zumba Class 6 pm, Fellowship Hall
- Tuesdays
Zumba Class 6 pm, Chapel
Girl Scouts—2nd & 4th Tuesdays 6:30 pm, FH
- Wednesdays
5:30 pm Dinner, Fellowship Hall
6:30 pm Bible Study, Chapel
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal
- Fridays
AI-Anon Noon, Board Room
- *****
- Sunday, February 4
2:30 pm Cello Recital, Chapel
- Tuesday, February 6
Noon—5 pm Greensboro TEACH, FH
7 pm Women of Valor at Elkins' home
- Wednesday, February 7 & 8
8—5:30 pm Greensboro TEACH, FH
- Sunday, February 11
12:15 pm Missions Meeting, Board Room
3 pm Healing Rhythms, Chapel
6 pm Deacons' Meeting, Board Room
- Sunday, February 18
GUM, 3rd Sunday Refreshments after 11 am service
- Tuesday, February 20
7:30 pm, PFLAG in Chapel
- ### Inside:
- p. 2-4 Farewell to Betty Withers*
Michael Usey
- p. 4-7 Farewell to Patricia Brower*
Michael Usey
- p. 8-10 Follow the Light*
Christian McIvor

Farewell to Betty Withers



I have a good friend who, when **faced with life's vagaries, is wont to say, "Life is a rich tapestry."** It's a phrase that encourages acceptance of the some of the difficult and unenjoyable things that happen in life. A handy interjection, because life is indeed challenging and hard, something Betty knew well, and accepted,

and made as enjoyable as possible. She chose all the texts for this service—of course she did—and the writer of Ecclesiastes also knew that life is a rich tapestry. Three thousand years ago he wrote:

There's an opportune time to do things, a right time for everything on the earth:

A right time for birth and another for death,
A right time to plant and another to reap,
A right time to kill and another to heal,
A right time to destroy and another to construct,
A right time to cry and another to laugh,
A right time to lament and another to cheer,
A right time to make love and another to abstain,
A right time to embrace and another to part,
A right time to search and another to count your losses,
A right time to hold on and another to let go,
A right time to rip out and another to mend,
A right time to shut up and another to speak up,
A right time to love and another to hate,
A right time to wage war and another to make peace.

Whatever was, is. Whatever will be, is. That's how it always is with God.

Humans and animals come to the same end—humans **die, animals die. We all breathe the same air. So there's really no advantage in being human. None. Everything's smoke.** We all end up in the same place—we all came from dust, we all end up as dust. Nobody knows for sure that the human spirit rises to heaven or that the animal spirit sinks into the earth. So I made up my mind that **there's nothing better for us men and women than to have a good time in whatever we do—that's our lot. Who knows if there's anything else to life?**

As the writer of Ecclesiastes said, there is a right time for everything under sun, and Betty lived long enough to see much of it.

As a little girl, she claimed that the only toys she had were corn cob dolls. She and her sisters would take a corn cob and using safety matches, strike and blow out the flame and use the blackened end to make eyes, nose and mouth for the cob dolls. They made dresses for the dolls using scraps of fabric from chicken feed sacks. (This is exactly the kind of dolls Laura Ingalls Wilder made on the western frontier a 100 years before.) **Not surprising since many of the girls' dresses were made from chicken feed sacks too** Betty had seven younger brothers and sisters, which meant there was always a small baby around to be looked after as Betty was growing up. She treated them as dolls also. She remembers carrying a baby around on her hip a good

part of the time. She loved babies, but also knew they were a lot of work.

As a young woman, Betty remembered a tough routine of working at home doing chores, working on the farm, and going **to school, life's rich tapestry.** Being from a large family of 13 children, as well as living on a farm, meant there were so many chores. As soon as she got home from school and changed clothes, she was off to work in the corn field, wheat field, cotton field, hay field, poppy fields (okay I made that one up) in season, until it was time to come in and milk the cows, before doing homework with lights out by 9 pm. Sundays were the only days she had any free time to do fun things, such as going to visit friends after church, or have friends over, go for walks, or play softball. There were no record players or radios to listen to and sadly no books to read, because she loved to read.

She graduated from high school, making straight As her senior year. There was no money for college. (None of her brothers and sisters went to college either.) So there was no money to buy her high school graduation **ring. After many tears and begging on Betty's part, her dad sold chickens to buy her ring.** After graduation, she came to Greensboro to live with her sister, Doll, who lived here. Here she met Bill and were married two years later. She attended McClungs Business College, but was unable to finish before graduating because she became pregnant with Phil. But, ever the learner, Betty took numerous business courses, attended lots of seminars and received many certificates and commendations during her working career.

Betty's first job out of high school was as candy clerk at the A&P Store on Commerce Place, which is exactly where she met Bill. Married in 1950, they had their first child in 1954. When she left for maternity leave in 54, she was a bookkeeper at the Walker

Dipe! Wipe! Swipe!



Our College Park Nursery is growing! There are many ways we can help welcome these sweet newborns to the world and to our church family. Here is one suggestion: diapers, wipes and gift cards are always helpful in those first few months. Below is a list of families who have recently welcomed a little one or will welcome a new baby soon. We have included addresses and registry information if known.

Ashley Bumgarner & Scott Killian welcomed baby Linden Wright on November 7th.
Address: 8754 Moody Rd., Liberty 27298

Rachel & Adam Carroll welcomed baby Joseph Koontz, on Nov. 13; 7 lbs., 10 oz., 21 1/4 inches.
Address: 1218 West Northwood St., Greensboro 27408

Katherine & Nathan Sparrow are due in January.
Address: 2308 Berkley Pl., Greensboro 27403

Christian & Chrissy McIvor are due in June.
Address: 5207 Carolwood Dr., Greensboro 27407

Avenue store. When Phil was one year old Betty went to work for Burlington Industries in the shipping department. She took her second maternity leave **from BI, for Dotty's birth in '57. Then she worked for Lorillard in Export Shipping and finally in 1960, she worked for the Clerk of Superior Court as second in command, until '78.** The next year, 1979, she got a job with the Admin office of the Raleigh courts, working in various positions until an opening for a higher paying position opened up. Betty was supervisor of records management, overseeing four field reps until her retirement in March of 92. She took early retirement at 62 because Bill had a stroke and needed her. They moved back to Greensboro soon afterwards.

Betty did a lot of sewing when her kids were small; she made most of the clothes for Dotty and Karen, as well as her own. She and Bill would take them to the farmer's field and pick summer vegetables, bringing them home for freezing and canning. Betty put up all the vegetables and fruits she could since she was frugal. But the children were not too fond of this chore. Betty also love to read—she had a sharp mind. **As Frederick Buechner wrote, "To be wise is to be eternally curious."**

She said that she was "the most fortunate mother in the world to have had three great children who have never been in any trouble. No drugs, no violation of the law, except minor traffic tickets. Each has had a successful career and is doing well for themselves and their family. **What a blessing God gave me in my wonderful children," she said. "Words cannot express my love for them. Now, I have 5 wonderful granddaughters and 2 grandsons, who have been such a part of my life. I now have 3 great-granddaughters, but, seldom get to see them as they live in Florida. I love all of them and keep up with them through photos and their mothers. What precious gifts!" Betty said. "First and foremost, God gave me a wonderful husband who has never mistreated me and I believe, loves me with all his heart. How many people are this fortunate? I feel that it is quite an accomplishment. God has been so gracious with these blessings." Life's rich tapestry.**

Her life had challenges. When she was three years old, she and her brother were playing on the woodpile. My brother, Berl, who was a couple of years older than I, told me to put my foot on the chopping block and he would cut off my toe with an axe. Obediently she did, and he did. The axe chopped through her patent leather shoes and **completely severed Betty's left big toe. Her older sister, Gradie, retrieved the toe just as a turkey was about to gobble it up. Her dad preserved the toe in a small bottle of corn liquor. Some 25 years later, Betty's father gave the toe to Bill saying, "You may as well have the rest of her."**

I loved Betty, and she did me, but I think Betty was diffident about me as her pastor, for at least for our first decade together. The root of our differences was that we had different ideas about what a senior pastor should be about, what a pastor should say and not say, and what a pastor should stand for in the community.

I do remember however after one sermon I preached **entitled, "Giving in Three Voices", in which I praised the faithful givers here and challenged those not yet giving.** During the sermon talkback—come to think of it, maybe she made her own sermon talkback that Sunday, but she loudly proclaimed to me, that was the **best sermon I've ever heard from you. After that, we seemed to have turned a corner.** But these are related to several things that I loved about Betty.

First, she said what she meant, and generally I greatly **appreciated this. I've never gotten use to the indirect speech of many older southern women, but you didn't** have to wonder what Betty thought or if she meant **what she said. She told me what she liked and didn't** like straight-up, and I tried to do the same to her. To her credit, she could take it too.

Another one of the things that we all absolutely loved about Betty was her passion for flowers and every kind of blooming shrub. In her front yard, back yard, both side yards, the woman had major flowers of every kind: Pansies, red roses (her favorite), lilac, impatience, daisies, Wood-Anemone, Carolina Lupine, Maidenhair Fern, Dwarf Crested Iris, Eastern Blue Star, even **Swamp Milkweed. This spring I'm starting to have a couple of beehives in my backyard, and I'm going to** miss being able to talk to her about what flowers are best for bees, and what blooms in each season. A couple of years ago I remember sitting around her kitchen table eating Yum-Yums while she sipped the chocolate shake I had brought her, as she taught me about flowers and what she planted where, and why, and when. She always, always had the best flowers, the greenest thumb, and absolutely loved gardening.

She and Bill loved to make pastoral visits to people in this congregation. If you were sick at home or in the hospital, or if you were lonely, Betty and Bill were likely **to come and see you, and often they'd bring over some good food.** Betty was a good cook. This was a lovely and generous part of who she was, and it flowed out of her. I remember not that long ago when she befriended one of our lonely young adults, Brant, and she invited him to sit with them, which he did for a long while. I have been speaking with Jay Brower, whose mother **Patricia died suddenly Wednesday morning. Jay's job** has prevented him from attending the 11:00 service for a couple of years, except rarely. I mentioned I was **speaking at Betty's funeral today, and he remembered her instantly, "She always greeted my mom and me so warmly, and she and my mom got along famously."** Classic Betty to be the face of love that greeted people at College Park.

She loved this church, and was here every time she could be. Bill was baptized here, and they were married here, right next door in Forest Chapel. Their kids were raised here too, and baptized in this font behind me. One of the great aspects of Betty is that, even when she **wasn't thrilled with me as senior pastor, she remained** deeply and totally committed to the people of this church, and to its mission. As a pastor, I have to say that is exactly the kind of discipleship we wish to engender in our members: people who will follow Jesus

continued on pg. 4

continued from pg. 3

here together and not the personality of a pastor, and remain committed to a church whether or not they totally agreed with the leadership at any given moment. She was here every time she could be, and several times **she wasn't even feeling up to it, adding to the rich** tapestry that is this church. She loved the people of College Park, and it showed often and generously.

The last time I visited her was three days before Christmas, just two weeks ago. As I was checking into Camden Place, I saw Bill park and get out of his truck. I **hurried to Betty's shared room, and found her sitting** quietly next to her bed. I sat on the other side. At this point she really could not see hardly at all. Bill came in and sat on the bed next to her. It was a tender scene: Bill held her hand, and they told each other how much they missed the other one. We talked, the three of us, but the real show was these two lovers saying how hard it was to sleep without the other one next to them. I **listened to them carefully: they weren't talking about** mundanties, but about what Betty was missing: her flowers, her church, her own bed in her own home. At this point she had been bouncing around from Heritage Greens to Wesley Long and now to Camden Place—all out of necessity in healing, perhaps, but it was hard on her spirit. There was such a tenderness between these **two, and it wasn't hard to imagine them as young lovers** 68 years ago making plans to be married. I remain thankful to have seen this moment of grace, and to have known and loved Betty Withers, who made so much out of **life's rich tapestry.**

Michael Usey
12 January 2018

Farewell to Patricia Brower



I clearly remember **Patricia, although I didn't** know her as well as all of you here. For years—3 or 4—she and Jay would greet me coming out of the 11:00 service here at College Park. She had a warm smile and a kind

word, making it clear where her son got his advanced people skills. As I preached I recall looking at her intelligent face, sitting in the back with Archie Carter (of blessed memory), Mark File or Scott Smith (who called her Tris the Dish), and other good friends.

Born in 1932, she grew up attending the Curry school, Greensboro Grimsley High, and Greensboro College. She was a talented and inspired teacher of art in Greensboro City Schools, Randolph Community College, and at large for more than fifty years, all the while remaining devoted to her family. Her memory endures in the art that she created and will continue to touch the lives of many beyond today. She cared deeply for her family and dedicated herself to protecting and providing the best for her loved ones.

Imagine being able to teach art for over 50 years. She influenced over one thousand young artists. Nowadays art is too often forgotten or neglected, but she knew the power of art. She was fun, humble, and shy, and these traits were probably keys to her huge success as an art teacher. She was particularly gifted teaching students who had some sort of issue. Her life reminds me of the Bertoldt Brecht quote, Art is not a mirror to reflect reality, but a hammer with which to shape it. When art is well done, it can change with way we see reality, and make clear new possibilities and expose truths we have not imaged. She sold 12 painting as recently as last fall. Hers was a life given to art and family. She used watercolors, acrylics, and other media. She restored antiques and painted furniture, creating serious art on those pieces, even whole murals on chest of drawers. Her art hangs even now in public places like Triad hospitals.

She was known for her amazing sour dough bread, stuffing, and homemade chicken pies. She loved jewelry—she let Ellie play with her collection in her jewelry box when she was a child—and now she enjoyed buying silver necklaces for her nieces. And shoes—the woman loved shoes. Patricia was a devoted walker, often walking 3 or more miles with Jim around the antique market.

Growing up she was a beauty, serving as the May Queen at Greensboro College and on floats as a beauty queen. She met her husband A.J. on a double date. He was 10 years older and pursued her for 4 years. They **were married in 1961, with Jay being born in '64 and Ellie in '67. He was a WWII vet and suffered from what**



New Bible Study w/ Don Durham

Jan. 31, Feb. 7 & 14
6:30 pm, Forest Chapel

Don Durham is the founder of Healing Springs Acres, a not-for-profit farm that grows food to give away. Description of sessions: Healing Springs Acres: A Campfire Stewpot Conversation about: mission/purpose/calling, relationality and relationships in ministry, strategic thinking and evaluating effectiveness, the spirituality of generosity and resourcing ministry, Sabbath pondering and other pregnant questions.



Healing Rhythms

Sunday, February 11
3:00 pm, Forest Chapel

Monica Citty-Hix will be leading this time: an hour devoted to tending our grief through guided meditation, drumming and reflection. Come and join us in the circle. We'll provide a variety of drums or you may bring your own.

Sponsored by Inner Ground, Inc.
Contact us at 2innerground@gmail.com
Free and open to all.

we would now call PTSD. The last 10 years of his life were difficult as AJ suffered with Alzheimer's, and Patricia nursed him well during that time. Patricia herself was a breast cancer survivor.

She was close to her two brothers, Carey, who has now passed and Richard, 13 years younger than she. She remembered a time when they were all very young, and she held Richard during a terrible thunderstorm that caused the whole house to shake. And Jay and Ellie remembered that she took Richard to an early Rolling Stones concert in the late sixties.

In 2000 Ellie took Patricia on a mother-daughter trip to the great art museums of Europe such as the Louvre, the Tate Modern, the Prado, the Pompidou in Paris, the National Gallery in London, the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. Patricia was thrilled—she saw art in person that she had taught for years. They took trains around Europe, and Patricia was so jazzed to have her own passport, her first at age 70. She and Ellie were close; they often talked 2 hours a day. When they would visit, Greg would remark how much Patricia could eat, calling her “Hollow Leg.” When she was planning to visit them, Greg would remind Ellie to buy lots of snacks. Patricia told Ellie that the first day that she took her to kindergarten, she dropped Ellie off, and then went home and painted all day, white boats on a very deep blue sea, she was so sad.

She loved her family, and her art, and her animals. She rode horses when she was younger. She loved a number of Golden retrievers too. She was fond of saying, “You won’t do,” an old fashion nod of approval. She was a fierce defender of her children and of what was right. When Ellie needed time away from Richmond College for medical reasons, the dean wouldn’t grant her leave, that is until Patricia read him the riot act. Patricia didn’t suffer fools gladly, something I absolutely loved about her. On her flight from London with Ellie, the child behind her was kicking her seat back, until Patricia stood up and told the mother off. Once when a prudish woman was talking her down to, Patricia bummed a cig from a friend, lit up, and started smoking, just to enrage that woman—it was the only time her kids ever saw her smoke, and she did it to put someone in her place. What a perfectly wonderful thing to do. Baptists are Christians with authority issues, and in moments like this she showed herself to be truly Baptist.

When Jay came out to Patricia, they were sitting on the sofa watching Robert Schuler (which is the only dark part of this story). He told her crying, and she responded. “You’re the same person you were five minutes ago. I love you and I always will. I don’t care who you love. It’s okay.” It was a holy moment, and perhaps the best in Jay’s life—to be known and loved for who you truly are by one’s own mother. It is a gift denied to too many. Jay said (and Ellie agreed), “She was my best friend, my rock, my counselor, a believer with a profound and quiet faith. She was my compass in life.”

There is this wonderful passage in Ephesians that says, “*We are God’s masterpiece. God has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things.*” (NLT). The New Testament was written originally in Greek. The Greek word for “masterpiece” is “poema.” It means work of art, workmanship, sculpture, painting. God says, “You’re my art. You’re my masterpiece. I don’t want you copying somebody else. I’ve put gifts in you — heart, abilities, personality, and experiences — and I want you to use them.” You have worth because of what God says about you and has done for you.

Patricia Brower was God’s poema, a divine work of art, and her love and her memory hang prominently in the gallery of our hearts and minds. We are all most blessed to have known her, and to have been loved by her. She was a kind and wonderful wife, mother, grandmother, sister and friend. Thanks be to God for the life of Patricia Brower. Amen.

Michael Usey
14 January 2018

Follow the Light

Growing up as a kid in Connecticut, I was always curious about everything. I wanted to see everything, I wanted to do everything, and I wanted to be everything. Growing up the son of two music teachers, I always enjoyed school and loved to learn. No one ever likes homework, but I remember always having a hunger and appreciation for the skills and knowledge I learned in school. Throughout high school and college, I distinctly remember different times when I honestly thought I wanted to be a doctor, a professional baseball player, a journalist, a forensic scientist, a teacher, a police officer, an FBI or CIA agent, a politician, a pastor or maybe even a Catholic priest, an astronaut, a musician, a news anchor, a proctologist, a **Patriots cheerleader... Okay, I made those last two up, but you get the idea.**

I remember my mom often remarking with a hint of frustration that I was always “twelve steps ahead of everybody.” I would often get excited about the possibilities of “what could be’s” and “what if’s,” and I was always thinking about what I was going to eventually “be.” What my mother of course lovingly meant was that I was so preoccupied with the future that I was missing the present. My eyes were always looking outward in so many different directions that I was never truly able to relax my gaze onto what Lin referred to last week as “the light that shines within.”

When it came time to decide what to pursue in college, I **wasn’t ready or interested in slowing down long enough for any real discernment process.** I made the practical choice and went for music. While I still had many different interests, I had always been most successful in my musical pursuits. The fact that my parents were music teachers and my twin brother was going to study music in college also added a little pressure. I did what I thought I *should* do based on my own perceived expectations of others, and this began a young adult academic and professional life **where my personal motto was pretty much, “do the next right thing.”** While that’s generally a good-hearted and decent personal policy, it’s also a pretty linear, controlling, and situational way of thinking, and it doesn’t necessarily allow much consideration for the big picture. Over the years, I became wrapped up in my own pursuit of “success,” and I didn’t even know how to define it. I was having trouble even defining myself. I was still *always looking* for answers. It was exhausting.

Meanwhile, I kept up a hobby of reading all kinds of books about the nature of reality, including texts from different Western and Eastern faiths, philosophy, and books on theoretical physics for the layperson. My spiritual journey was an intense part of my personal and intellectual life, but I felt strongly inclined to compartmentalize it away from my professional life. My own past experiences as a teacher with people who brought religion into the workplace had not been positive, and I was a little uncomfortable outwardly identifying myself as a Christian considering the exclusive and prejudiced messages I saw many churches promoting. I imagine many of you can identify with not wanting to be labeled as *that*

type of “Christian.” Rather, I wanted to better understand the life and teachings of Jesus. I attended various progressive churches, becoming a member here and attending regularly for awhile, and I felt that I understood God pretty well on an intellectual level. But of course any perceived understanding of God is different from truly *knowing God.* **Being intellectually aware of one’s divine spark but keeping it hidden away under a basket is a very different thing from being spiritually lit on fire and letting that light shine before others.**

The psalmist in today’s first reading reminds us that to know God is to truly know our own selves. It is precisely because God knows and has made us that we are able to live into our individual identities... as fearfully, wonderfully, and perfectly made children of God. To accept this reality and surrender to it is to know and therefore unite with our Creator. Each one of us is a perfectly unique, creative expression of God. Acknowledging this for **one’s own self is an affirmation of the very same divinely created nature of all people - every individual.** As theologian, activist, and author Howard Thurman wrote:

Children’s Hour Wednesday Schedule!

6:00 pm - Music from Around the World (Tone Chimes)

6:30 pm - Stories from Around the World

In this short hour, we engage our children in activities that guide them to think about what it looks like to practice our faith in the world. We do this by reading stories from around the world, learning about ministries around the world, and playing music from other parts of the world. We hope your child can join us on Wednesday evenings.



What else do we offer families on Wed. Night?

6:00 pm - Adult Handbell Choir, Sanctuary

6:30 pm - Adult Bible Study, Chapel

7:30 pm - Adult Choir Rehearsal, Choir Room

Childcare!

Childcare is provided every Wed. night, 5:30 -7:30 pm.

To speak of the love for humanity is meaningless. There is no such thing as humanity. What we call humanity has a name, was born, lives on a street, gets hungry, **needs all the particular things we need... People do not love in general, but they do love in particular.** To love means dealing with persons in the concrete rather than in the abstract. In the presence of love, there are no **types or stereotypes, no classes and no masses.**"

As God has created, searched, and known all, God's divine light permeates all. This recognition of life as an interconnected web of relationships that spring from and return to the same unitive Source calls us to allow ourselves to be led by our inner light, using our unique gifts to recognize, draw out, and share in that same light in others. This happens in little ways every day. While I was teaching at Southwest Guilford High School, I had an amazing principal who was all about relationships, understanding, and empowerment. Every time I left his office, I felt inspired to be a better teacher and a better person. All of us have people like this in our lives, people who are living into their best selves and lighting fires in the rest of us. I believe every one of us is called to be that person for others.

Coming to know and be led by God rather than seeking to simply understand God on an intellectual level necessarily involves an admission that we will never fully understand God. As the psalmist says in verses 17-18, **"How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! I try to count them -- they are more than the sand; I come to the end -- I am still with you."** **The infinite nature of** God is unimaginable, but beyond the limits of our understanding, God is still there. All we can know and do is the result of a loving Creator making us perfectly us, and **that is enough. We don't need to understand God, we simply need to learn how to move in God's divine rhythm,** becoming fully ourselves in the service of our Creator. In allowing our own light to shine through love and service to our divinely created neighbors, we fulfill our purpose and **thereby allow others to "Come and see."**

I've used the term **"calling"** or **"called"** now several times, and it's a term I had avoided for most of my life. In fact, for a long time I was generally uncomfortable using traditional Christian vocabulary because of all the negative connotations that have been assigned to much of the terminology by evangelical churches and groups. Until **recently, I envisioned a "calling" as being some kind of delusional experience that was reserved for extremely religious people who wanted a term to justify their experience and give themselves an air of importance.** However, in my own personal growth as a follower of Jesus, I have come to understand that a calling does not necessarily involve seeing physical angels come out of the **sky and it's not a one-and-done type of deal.** Callings come to us in a variety of manners and they are realized and fulfilled in just as many different ways. Individuals are called to different careers, committees, projects, volunteer opportunities, and relationship roles, among other things. Sometimes, we immediately take up our call because we know at our core that we are fulfilling our purpose, but **throughout our lives, each of us needs a "Come and see" moment or two.**

In verse 38 of John, chapter 1, just prior to where today's Gospel reading starts, Jesus turns to his first followers and asks, **"What are you looking for?"** It seems that Jesus wants to know that his first followers are legitimate truth-seekers. These are the first words spoken by Jesus in the Gospel of John, and Jesus wants to make sure that his followers are not preoccupied and blinded by their worldly desires, but available to receiving God's divine light. **The men following Jesus ask him where he's staying, and he tells them to, "Come and see."** Jesus knew that these guys didn't necessarily have a burning desire to see how he decorated his apartment, but that they were following *their* light in looking for a deeper, more fundamental truth. Likewise, the disciples immediately recognized and trusted the light of God they found in Jesus, and they connected with it in answering his call to follow.

The next day, Philip also immediately answers Jesus' call to follow, but Nathanael is not so easily influenced when Philip tells him about Jesus. Obviously turned off by **Philip's claim that the one Moses and the prophets had written about had come, Nathanael snidely asks, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"** At the time, Nathanael was probably busy looking to Norway for a messiah!

But Philip then provides Nathanael with his own "come and see" moment. As they approach Jesus, Jesus proclaims that Nathanael is **"an Israelite in whom there is no deceit,"** affirming the divine light he sees in Nathanael. **Still wary of Jesus' validity, Nathanael asks how Jesus** knows him. Jesus responds by telling Nathanael he saw him **"under the fig tree."** This could be seen as a little humor on Jesus' behalf. Of course Jesus knew that Nathanael was a faith-keeper and a truth-seeker, after all he is the Word and the life eternal! Jesus knows the truth that resides in Nathanael's inner light as a wonderfully and fearfully made creation of God, and he affirms Nathanael immediately. **Nathanael, taken aback by Jesus' claim that** he knew Nathanael before meeting him, has an epiphany and recognizes the truth in Jesus, proclaiming him to be Son of God and King of Israel. Seemingly amused, Jesus tells Nathanael that he will witness much greater things **than this. He then tells all of his followers that they "will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."** Put another way, recognizing Nathanael as a perfect child of God is a *given*, and the followers of Jesus will come to know much deeper divine truths through his ministry.

Ironically, Nathanael was initially ready to dismiss the call of Jesus. **He had to be pulled along by Philip to "come and see."** Rather than recognizing his call immediately, he needs a bit of convincing through personal experience. But **once he's in the presence of Jesus, Nathanael moves past** his doubt, truly seeing and knowing the divine light in Jesus. **After being called to "come and see" and pointed** toward Jesus by Philip, Nathanael eventually accepts his call to follow that light, with a complete change of heart.

Knowing that every one of us is a perfect and creative expression of God and knowing that we are all called to

continued on pg. 8

continued from pg. 7

follow Jesus provides deep comfort and assurance. However, we can so easily get caught up with the distractions of the world. With bills to pay, deadlines to meet, appointments to make, schedules to keep track of, and people to look after, not to mention our own personal fears, doubts, and anxieties, we sometimes find ourselves stuck in a spiritual rut without knowing how we got there. We completely overlook the light and **lose track of our calling. It's in those times that we need to remember that the light eternally shines from within, and our expressed purpose as Christians is to make ourselves available to "come and see," so we can let that light guide us.**

Martin Luther King, Jr. described his own "come and see" moment in his book, *Stride Toward Freedom*. He wrote:

I was ready to give up. With my cup of coffee sitting untouched before me, I tried to think of a way to move out of the picture without appearing a coward. In this state of exhaustion, when my courage had all but gone, I decided to take my problem to God. With my head in my hands, I bowed over the kitchen table and prayed aloud.

The words I spoke to God that midnight are still vivid **in my memory. "I am here taking a stand for what I believe is right. But now I am afraid. The people are looking to me for leadership, and if I stand before them without strength and courage, they too will falter. I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left. I've come to the point where I can't face it alone."**

At that moment, I experienced the presence of the Divine as I had never experienced God before. It seemed as though I could hear the quiet assurance of an inner voice saying: "Stand up for justice, stand up for truth; and God will be at your side forever."

Almost at once my fears began to go. My uncertainty disappeared. I was ready to face anything.

Facing his doubt and giving it up to God in prayer, Dr. King recovered his calling, exposing the light of Christ within that had been cloaked in fear, doubt, and exhaustion.

I can distinctly remember two separate and relatively recent **"come and see" moments of my own that have led me to better understand my own calling.** When my daughter Juliette was born, my life completely changed. I now had a living, breathing, physical piece of myself that I was responsible for protecting and guiding **through a world that often doesn't make sense. I** remember watching her as an infant and recognizing the faces of each one of my relatives in her as she made different expressions. I distinctly *knew* an eternal truth in her, saw her light, and wanted her to learn how to follow it. This led our family to become more intentional about our spiritual practice, and we began attending church much more regularly.

My other recent "come and see" moment was at the Guilford College commencement ceremony in 2016,

when Rev. William Barber gave the keynote address. **I was there to play in a brass quintet and didn't realize he'd be speaking, but when he started, I was completely drawn in.** I listened to him speak explicitly and passionately about the many injustices and inequalities we face in our society and repeatedly encourage the **graduating class to "hold up your light and let it shine."** While listening, something changed in me, like a veil being lifted, and I realized on a deep level that I was not living my purpose. In fact, I had never even truly made **myself available to hear my call. But after Rev. Barber's speech that day, I began to hear for the first time. I realized that, in a way, I had been afraid to let my own inner light shine. I wasn't doing everything in my potential to legitimately make the world a better place, and I been masking this fear with a continual stream of professional pursuits in a field where I wasn't able to use my gifts to their fullest potential in love and service. Keeping my spiritual life bottled up and compartmentalized was keeping me from living into my true self.**

Once I understood my call and was able to truly see the light, the only reasonable response was to follow it. That light has led through one open door after another, offering opportunities to serve diverse communities in creative ways as well as leading to continually stronger and more genuine personal, community, and professional relationships. Of course that light has also led to a much deeper relationship with and knowing of God. And I thank God every day for the opportunity to serve at the church where I feel like I learned what it is to be a *genuine* follower of Jesus.

But enough about me, what about you? **Have you ever had any "come and see" moments? Are you maybe in need of another one? During the sermon talk-back at Tessera last week and during Tammy's children's sermon at the 11 o'clock service, we heard from several members of the congregation about the various places they find the light of God shining. As the perfectly made creative expressions of God that we all are – health care workers, teachers, private business owners, lawyers, students, service-people, social workers, librarians, musicians, stay-at-home parents, athletes, first responders, counselors – how can we use the gifts we've been given to respond to our calling and "come and see" our divine Truth, revealed in Jesus? Just follow the light.**

Christian McIvor

Thank You!

Lauren Sandifer would like to thank everyone for the many ways she has been showered with support since her cancer diagnosis. I am so grateful to be surrounded by you amazing people and the love you show me.

Much love, Lauren

PROJECT RUTH

Learning to Achieve

Dear Faithful Student Sponsor,

As the holiday season bustle has come to an end and the new year has dawned, we want to thank you for the precious gift of education and increased life chances your faithful support makes for your student 5000 miles away from your home. The Ruth School is proud this school year to have begun two kindergarten classes as a response to the increase desire in the community for children to attend the Ruth School.

The student you are supporting this year is Carmen Stoian. She is 10 years old and in the fourth grade. Carmen is one of eight children. She lives with all of her siblings and parents in a one-room apartment with one double bed. Their situation is very difficult yet despite these hardships, she is a very well behaved child. She enjoys English language class very much and practicing what she has learned with English speaking guests at the Ruth School. Her favorite color is yellow. When she grows up, Carmen aspires to be an artist.



JOSHUA

Books 101
Sunday School Class
Room 305

Spring 2018
The Class will be Studying
the Book of Joshua

GOD IN BOOKS

2018 Winter Read

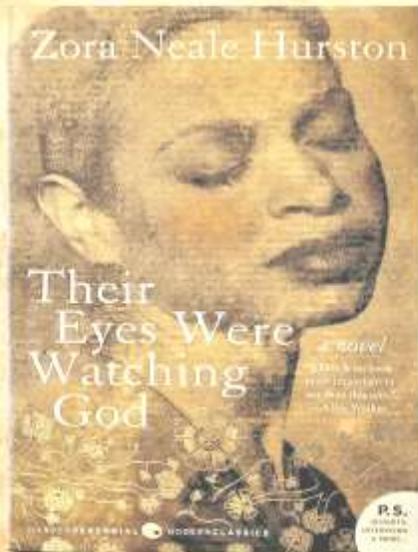
YOU ARE
WHAT YOU LOVE

THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF HABIT

JAMES K. A. SMITH

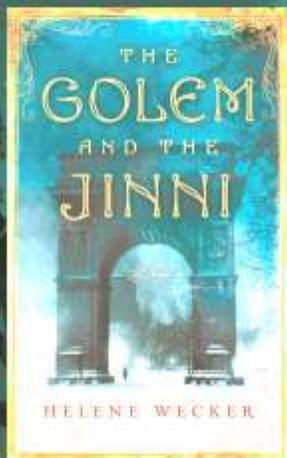
Sunday School Class
Room 303

Women of Valor New Book



Next Meeting Feb. 6, 7 pm
Lisa Elkins' Home
Please Bring Snacks to Share

Mostly Men's Occasional Book Club



Tuesday, March 6
6:30 pm, Sticks & Stones

College Park Sunday School Opportunities

Nursery

Birth-23 months (Parking Lot Entrance) Childcare provided by both Preferred Childcare, Inc. employees and College Park volunteers.

Toddlers

2—3 1/2 yrs. (Parking Lot Entrance)

1st, 3rd Sundays—Music & Tone Chimes

2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays—Hands-on Faith Lessons

Children's Sunday School

PreK—1st, 2nd—5th (Children's Library & Youth Room)

1st & 3rd Sundays—Music & Tone Chimes

2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays—Hands-on Faith Lessons

Sunday Morning Youth Gathering

6th—12th grades (Fellowship Hall) For more information:

<https://cpbcyouthchaos.wordpress.com/youth-Sunday-school/>

Adult Study Groups: 9:45—10:45 am Sundays

God in Books—reading: *You Are What You Love, the Spiritual Power of Habit*. What do you want? This not-as-simple-as-it-seems question is at the heart of *You Are What You Want*, the winter read of the God in Books Sunday school class. According to the author, the question is the "first, last, and most fundamental question of Christian discipleship" and "is buried under almost every other question Jesus asks each of us." Seeking clarity in the new year? The balance that comes with it? Please join us for thoughtful discussion as we seek to better ground our Christianity in these turbulent times. Room 303, after Tessera.

Bible 101—(Room 305) is studying the book of Joshua.

Pathfinders—(Fellowship Hall)

Class explores a variety of faith topics.

Adult 3—(Parlor)

Class uses the Smith & Helwys Sunday school curriculum to guide conversations of faith, Bible and life.



Dear College Park Baptist Friends,

Thank you so much for your incredibly kind and generous support - it is certainly needed and appreciated now more than ever.

We are grateful to have you all as friends and for the many ways you put your faith into action and love your neighbors as yourselves.

With your support we've served 4,000 immigrants over the past year, while educating and connecting thousands more in our community through our Stranger to Neighbor presentations and events.

Thank you for all the ways you bring dignity and hope to the lives of our newest neighbors, while building a better, more united community for all people.

Peace, and please know you are always welcome at Faith Action.

Rev. David Fraccaro,
Executive Director
The FaithAction Team

Announcements

College Park Website

Our redesigned church website is now very mobile friendly with several new features. To keep better informed about happenings of the church, check out the online

Collage blog that is updated frequently. And see a weekly **calendar of events**. The **"Library"** is an archive of memoirs, sermons, etc. Give your offering online, read about our latest mission projects or the capital campaign, and share the site as you try to explain our uniqueness to your friends and family.



www.collegeparkchurch.com

Options for Children during the Worship Service



There are several child care options during the worship service: Nursery (birth—24 months) Room 201 main floor, Toddlers (2-3 yr.) Room 104 lower level, Wee Worship (PreK -1st grade) Room 110 lower level. Your child is also welcome to stay in the service with you. Kids Worship binders are available with activities related to the sermon. Look for the bins at the front and back of the sanctuary.

New Members/Address Changes

Brendan Banner: Methodist University, Box 12685, 5400 Ramsey St., Fayetteville, NC 28311

Lexi Eagles new email: lexieagles96@gmail.com

Diane Ingold new email: dianeingold@gmail.com

Marnie & Daniel Fisher-Ingram (Mollie-10) 1519 Split Oak Lane Apt. H, Henrico, VA 23229

Chuck & Caroline Joyce: 366 Carlisle Park Dr., Kernersville 27284-7111

Vickie Lumpkin new email: vglumpkin@gmail.com

Carly Maas: ASU Box 11840, Lovill Hall, Boone, NC 28608

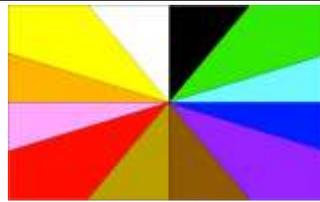
MacKenzie Phillips: 15673 Lee Hall, Raleigh, NC 27607

Blair Ramsey: 708 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Mill Creek Condominiums Unit E-7, Chapel Hill 27514

Hannah Usey: UNCW Box 21824, 601 S. College Rd. Wilmington, NC 28403

Cheyenne Walden: 920 W. 37th Pl., Suite 3304D Los Angeles, CA 90007

Bill Withers: Heritage Greens, 801 Meadowood St., Suite 109, Greensboro, 27409



Unity flag magnets are now available for \$2/2 magnets. Take an extra magnet to give to a friend as a way of spreading the love and message of unity.

You may also order and pay online:

<http://www.collegeparkchurch.com/unity-flag/>

Prayer Requests

Please write prayer requests on a visitor information card and place in the offering plate or put prayer requests in the prayer box in the Prayer Room.

Kitchen Rebuild Update January 2018

(Kitchen Renovation)

\$205,000 Total Cost

\$134,940 Available Funds

\$70,060 Needed to Pay for Kitchen

3 Ways 2 Give

For added convenience, we have three ways for you to give to the church general budget or special offerings:

- Write a check or give cash at one of our Sunday services or at the office during the week. If you don't have envelopes with an assigned number (for better record keeping), contact the church office.
- **Set up bill pay through your bank online. It's a favorite since there are usually no fees to you or the church, and it's very easy.**
- Pay online with a credit card at: www.CollegeParkChurch.com. Choose the option to cover the credit card fees or let the church pay them.



Zumba classes meet Mondays (\$3), 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall & Tuesdays (\$5 or \$20 for 5 classes) 6 pm in the Chapel.

Be sure to join us for fun & fellowship!

February GUM Donation

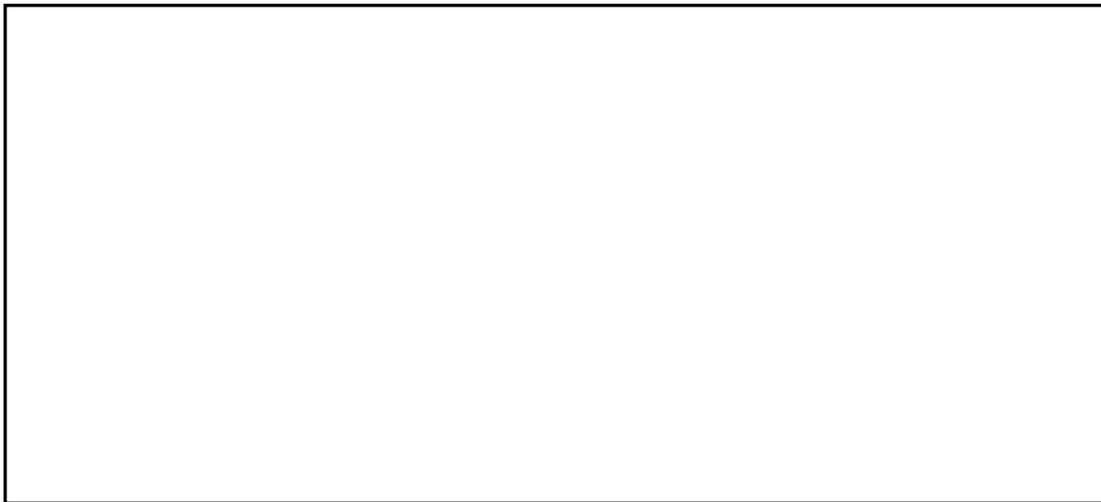
Canned Soup (chicken, tomato or vegetable)

Place donations in the wicker basket in the side foyer entrance (beside the bookshelves).



College Park
An American Baptist Church
1601 Walker Avenue,
Greensboro, North Carolina 27403-2318

Return Service Requested



Looking Ahead—February

Feb.

- 1 NA Noon, Chapel
- 2 Al-Anon Noon, Board Room
- 4 8:30 am Tessera, 9:45 SS, 11 am Worship; 2:30 pm Cello Recital, Chapel; Youth Souper Bowl Party
- 5 NA Noon, Chapel; Zumba 6 pm, FH
- 6 **NA Noon, Chapel; G'boro TEACH 12-5 pm, FH; Zumba 6 pm, Chapel; Women of Valor 7 pm, Elkins' home**
- 7 **G'boro TEACH 8-5:30, FH; NA Noon, Chapel; Wed. Night Dinner, 5:30 pm, FH; Bible Study 6:30 pm, Chapel; 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal**
- 8 **8-5:30 G'boro TEACH, FH; NA Noon, Chapel**
- 9 Al-Anon Noon, Board Rm.
- 11 8:30 am Tessera, 9:45 SS, 11 am Worship; Missions Meeting 12:15pm Board Rm.; Healing Rhythms 3 pm, Chapel; **Deacons' Meeting 6 pm, Board Rm.**
- 12 NA Noon, Chapel; Zumba 6 pm, FH
- 13 NA Noon, Chapel; Pancake Dinner & Lenten Workshop 6 pm, FH; Girl Scouts 6:30 pm; Zumba 6 pm, Chapel
- 14 NA Noon, Chapel; Wed. Dinner 5:30 pm; Bible Study 6:30 pm, Chapel; Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm
- 15 NA Noon, Chapel
- 16 Al-Anon Noon, Board Rm
- 18 GUM Sunday: 8:30 am Tessera, 9:45 SS, 11 am Worship; 11 am Blended Worship; 3rd Sunday Refreshments after 11 am Service, Chapel
- 19 NA Noon, Chapel; Zumba 6 pm, FH
- 20 NA Noon, Chapel; Zumba 6 pm, Chapel; PFlag 7:30 pm, Chapel
- 21 NA Noon, Chapel; Wed. Night Dinner 5:30 pm, FH; Pendergraft Meeting 5:30 pm, Board Rm.; Bible Study 6:30 pm, Chapel; Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm
- 22 NA Noon, Chapel; Pendergraft 5:30 pm, Board Rm.
- 23 Al-Anon Noon, Board Rm.
- 25 8:30 am Tessera, 9:45 SS; 11 am Worship
- 26 NA Noon, Chapel; Zumba 6 pm, FH
- 27 NA Noon, Chapel; Girl Scouts 6:30 pm, FH; Zumba 6 pm, Chapel
- 28 NA Noon, Chapel; Wed. Night Dinner 5:30 pm, FH; Bible Study 6:30 pm, Chapel; Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm

Church Telephone: (336) 273-1779; Fax: (336) 273-9637
www.collegeparkchurch.com cpbcgbo@bellsouth.net

Alliance of Baptists - American Baptist Churches
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

2017 Total Food Donations = 785 Pounds

Every Member a Minister

Phyllis Calvert, Treasurer
Jana Dye, WFU Intern at College Park
Rydell Harrison, Minister of Music & Worship
Darlene Johnson, Sexton
Amy Lowrance, Deacon Chair
Christian McIvor, Assistant Minister
David Soyars, Organist
Lin Story-Bunce, Associate Minister
Michael S. Usey, Pastor
Nate Usey, Budding Beekeeper
Annette Waisner, Office & Media Manager

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Progressive - Diverse - Ecumenical