



# The Spire

November 2019



## Pastor's Page

One of the many things I love about being Presbyterian (PCUSA) is the beautiful and thoughtful way the early Reformers thought about what they were doing, as they were building an alternative to the church that was in such need of reforming. It would have been easy for them to have taken the attitude that “We know better, and we are going to fix things for good,” but instead, they used an approach that showed a great deal of humility. They knew that they were people of their own time and place who had no crystal ball by which to see into the future. They had the humility to understand that the church that needed reforming would always need to keep reforming in the future. So, they adopted a motto, and being people of the 16th century, they had to put it in Latin. The motto has become part of our Constitution, in the Book of Order (F-2.02) “The church affirms *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei*, that is, The church reformed, always to be reformed according to the Word of God in the power of the Spirit.” By the way, let you might think that “Word of God” refers to the Bible itself, the paragraph that contains this motto also says, “Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as the Scriptures bear witness to him.” Jesus is the “Word made flesh” according to John’s gospel.

So, what does this mean for us today, here at Central Presbyterian Church? First, that we hold up Jesus as the standard. We try to imagine God as Jesus did. We look at people, “good” people, and “bad” people the way Jesus did. We try to live as Jesus taught us to. And we are open to looking at ourselves, individually and as a congregation and as a denomination, and concluding, “we have gotten it a bit wrong here: we need some further reformation, to be more authentic followers of Jesus.” And, here is why I love being PCUSA; we have done this. We have said, “We got it wrong about women when we excluded them from leadership.” So, we reformed our ways. We came to the conclusion that we were a mainly white church that did not reflect well the racial diversity of our communities, so we reformed by being intentionally open to greater diversity. We did it again, recently when we concluded that we had gotten it wrong about excluding gay people from all of the opportunities enjoyed by straight people, so we reformed.

By the way, we call ourselves “Presbyterians” mainly because when the Reformation came to Scotland, they adopted that name, and brought it with them to America, but just about everywhere else in the world we are simply called “Reformed.” The PCUSA is a member of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. I love that name; it reminds us that the church that is Reformed is always in need of and always practicing new reformation.

This openness to ongoing reformation has led us to be humble about our style of worship too. We like it; of course, we do. We are used to it. We grew up with it. We have many memories of significant events that happened throughout our lives in our style, like meaningful worship services, funerals, weddings, and special seasonal services. But we are also humble enough to know that this style evolved over time into what it is today. Our particular style is a modification of the Roman Catholic Mass, which also had a long history of development. Early Christians met in private homes.

## Pastor's Page continued:

Only after Christianity became a legal religion in the Roman Empire, in the fourth century, did Christians meet in larger groups in public. The practice of the preacher wearing a black robe which so many of us did for so long came from the university: they were academic robes that the professors wore (and still do in some European universities, like Oxford).

The fact that we have a tradition of reforming, and a humble awareness of our historical development has led us, in the PCUSA, to be open to new forms of worship. Many of our congregations offer a contemporary worship service that seems to meet the needs of younger worshippers. We are open to innovations even beyond the Sunday morning worship service too. The General Assembly's goal of starting "1,001 New Worshipping Communities" in ten years has produced a wide variety of groups that meet in places as diverse as a fitness center or a skateboard park.

This month Soniyyah (Sonna) and I will be attending a conference at Columbia Seminary in the Atlanta area as part of that 1,001 New Worshipping Communities effort. We will be trying to listen to the Spirit to see what new kinds of ministry might be just right for our community of the River Valley. It is our hope and prayer that we will find new ways to reach the people who the old ways are not reaching anymore. Maybe this will be part of being truly Reformed, by "always reforming" according to the living Word; Jesus, whom we seek to follow.

## November Birthdays

Mollie Redding	11/01
Jo Hardy	11/02
Tommy Fallin	11/04
David Potts	11/09
Erin Porter	11/13
Christine Hlavin	11/15
Michael Hall	11/19
Sheila Mann	11/19
Vicky Rockford	11/21
Charles Russell	11/22
Betty McSwain	11/24
Young Doo Kim	11/28
Tara Kifer	11/28
Sandra Barron	11/28
Mandy Fry	11/29



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## Money Counter for November

David Beckman

## Care Cart for the Month of November

Barbara Clark, Peggie Sabbs



The Care Cart makes its journey down our aisle each week during the offertory. The Care Cart is where we place our NON-Perishable Grocery offerings. These items are given to the Clearinghouse Food Pantry when the storage bin is full. Please no bread or other products which mold or require refrigeration.

## Stewardship Dedication Sunday Nov. 17

In worship on November 17, we will be offering our pledges for the coming year. Please be in prayerful reflection about how you will respond, for the sake of this community, our future, and our community here in the River Valley.

## Belief...

I recently had a conversation with a friend and the subject of belief came up. At one point in the conversation he asked, “do you believe that?” My response was “well... I thought I believed that, but when you put it like that I guess, I don’t.” Knowing what we don’t believe can at times reveal what we truly believe. As my friend pressed me on the issue, I started a brief mental evaluation and concluded that I could fill up several storage units with the things that I don’t believe. Counselors and therapists often talk about their clients’ core belief system. Just like our computers operate off Mac OS or Windows, our belief systems operate off of information and memories. From infancy on we gather information through our senses and we store them. Eventually, some of those thoughts, ideas and experience become core to our being. These core memories build our belief system. Our belief system guides our choices and our actions. We operate from them unconsciously; this can be good and bad. In the same way our computers have to be updated in order to function properly and effectively, so do our core beliefs. Some of these updates takes place naturally over night while we are sleeping. We wake up and we are no longer afraid of the boogey man, we understand that a person can be angry with us, and still love us. We like updates that happen overnight without much effort on our part. But there are others updates that require you to purchase, install, wait and then verify. Likewise, sometimes our personal core belief system has to be manually updated or challenged. What we believe about ourselves is the best indicator of what we can accomplish. What do you tell yourself about yourself? Is there a core belief, an underlying memory that tells you that you can’t do this because you are too old, too young, too busy, too much of something and not enough of the other? I challenge you as my friend challenged me, to update our core belief system. Your voice matters, your presence is important, and you have something unique to contribute to the work of justice. Our next PACE meeting is November 7th at 6:30 PM at Central Presbyterian. Come let’s update our core belief system together.

Loving and believing in you,

Rev. Soniyyah “Sonna” B.Key

## Focus on Kathya

The really good news about Kathya comes from the generosity of this congregation. The auction that took place in the CDC building and was facilitated by Gale Beckman and David Whitt was a huge success. The Oktoberfest (led by Jackie Franklin and the FUND Committee) raised another good amount of money. The special collection taken up following Worship on the first Sunday of the month, has continued to show the love of this congregation.

Less than positive news as Kathya deals with the health of the family. Neither Kathya nor her oldest son has been able to have needed surgery because of other health issues. The poor health of this little family is a continuing concern. It is our hope that our contributions and prayers help in this situation.

Please continue caring for Kathya with your prayers and your contributions. I think email messages of encouragement would also be appreciated. The email address is [kfdkatium@yahoo.com](mailto:kfdkatium@yahoo.com).

Here are a few new pictures of Kathya and her boys.



<b>Mercy</b>				
<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Week of 11/3</b>	<b>Week of 11/10</b>	<b>Week of 11/17</b>	<b>Week of 11/24</b>
<b>Monday</b>	Gary Simpson	Galen Hunter	Cissy Rose	David Harp
<b>Tuesday</b>	Charles Cook	Gary Simpson	Galen Hunter	Cissy Rose
<b>Wednesday</b>	Gale Beckman	Charles Cook	Gary Simpson	Galen Hunter
<b>Thursday</b>	Sandy Barron	Gale Beckman	Charles Cook	Gary Simpson
<b>Friday</b>	Mike McClure	Sandy Barron	Gale Beckman	Charles Cook

<b>Baptist Health</b>				
<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Week of 11/3</b>	<b>Week of 11/10</b>	<b>Week of 11/17</b>	<b>Week of 11/24</b>
<b>Monday</b>	John Hale	Mike McClure	Sandy Barron	Gale Beckman
<b>Tuesday</b>	Debbie Gordon	John Hale	Mike McClure	Sandy Barron
<b>Wednesday</b>	Linda Riley	Debbie Gordon	John Hale	Mike McClure
<b>Thursday</b>	David Harp	Linda Riley	Debbie Gordon	John Hale
<b>Friday</b>	Cissy Rose	David Harp	Linda Riley	Debbie Gordon

## Listing of Staff and Church Leaders 2019-2020:

### Session Members:

David Whitt (Clerk of Session)  
 Cissy Rose  
 Mike McClure  
 Gale Beckman  
 John Hale  
 Debbie Gordon  
 Linda Riley  
 David Harp  
 Galen Hunter  
 Gary Simpson  
 Charles Cook  
 Sandy Barron

### Trustees:

Ken Cowan  
 Jackie Franklin  
 Chris McRae

### Deacon Members:

Roberta Elliott - Moderator  
 Theresa Hardgrave  
 Jo Hardy  
 Sandy Mackenzie  
 Larry Hall  
 Kathryn Rice  
 Alda Rae Epperson  
 Dave Kotarek  
 Chris Hlavin  
 Martin Hyatt  
 Janis McClure  
 Renda Cook

### Church Staff:

Pastor - Rev. Steven Kurtz  
 Pastor - Rev. Soniyyah B. Key  
 Music Director- Sheila Mann  
 Organist- Barbara Jetton  
 Financial Sec.- Cheryl Sykes  
 Custodian- Elvia Reyna  
 Secretary- Pat Kent

## Coffee Host for the Month of November

11/03 - Team 5, Franklin  
 11/10 - Team 6, Gordon  
 11/17 - Team 7, Flexible  
 11/24 - Team 8, Whitt



## Flower List for November

11/03 - Mandy Fry  
 11/10 - Betty Stutts  
 11/17 - Karen Williams  
 11/24 - Pilhyun You

## November Greeters:

Marilyn Simpson and Linda Riley

## Central's Meal Share



Remember: if a meal is needed for a church member, contact Andrea Beckman at 479-452-4698 or by email at [a.beckman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:a.beckman@sbcglobal.net).

If you are unable to reach Andrea, you can call Pat at the church office.

## Deacon's Corner

The Deacons had a busy October and it looks like November will be active as well. Our yearly picnic was held in October. In addition to the delicious lunch of burgers, hot dogs, and all the fixings, we played Bingo and had our traditional Bag-O tournament. We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who brought door prizes for bingo. As for the Bag-O tournament, it was close. Pastor Steven and yours truly won the Championship trophy, with Betty McSwain and Larry Hall coming in second.

Well, Thanksgiving is right around the corner. The Deacons will be having lunch/dinner on November 28, Thanksgiving Day. Our church service will start at 11:30 AM with Thanksgiving dinner served immediately afterward. We will post sign up sheets for food and cleanup participation. More on that later. Date with your Deacon is coming up again, a time for everyone to connect with his or her deacon. The date will be confirmed later. Please let us know if you have any suggestions for any of the events ahead. If you have a need, the Deacons are here to help.

Blessings,

Dave K.



## Care Committee

Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month, a *Shut-in Visitation* group of caring individuals meet at Williamsburg Kitchen at 12:00. Over lunch, we discuss visiting the shut-ins of our church. We team up and then go to visit those who aren't able to come to church. Please join this important mission of our church. We hope to see you on November 19th.

## Thanksgiving Dinner

The Deacons are planning to prepare Thanksgiving dinner on Thanksgiving day for our church families who do not have plans to eat with family or friends. The Deacons will provide turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, homemade rolls and cranberry sauce. There will be a sign up sheet on the bulletin board outside the kitchen to sign up for side dishes and desserts. We will provide coffee, iced tea and lemonade.

## “Jesus wasn’t White”

This past September 13, there was an act of vandalism here in Fort Smith which police are investigating which “might be considered a hate crime under federal law” according to the Times Record. A car was spray-painted with the words, “move” and “white power” and with Nazi symbols. The owners of the car had recently moved into the neighborhood. They are white but have mixed-race children. A person I know saw the article and was disturbed by it. He wanted to send a message of racial acceptance. So he contacted me and all the other people who have digital signs on Rogers Ave. asking them to put a message up that spoke to racial harmony at least on the following Saturday. I thought about it and it occurred to me, as a Christian, that Jesus was from the Middle East, so he was neither Aryan nor Caucasian. He would not be considered “white”. So, I came up with a three slide sequence that said: 1) We love Jesus; 2) Jesus wasn’t white; 3) We love Jesus. It is incredible to me, to think that there are white supremacists who consider themselves Christians, who do not seem to understand that Jesus was not “white.” I think (I hope) there are very few real racists in the River Valley, but to any who might be here and who might drive by our sign, I wanted to give them something to consider.

The article appeared in the Times Record. You can still access it online at:

<https://www.swtimes.com/news/20190912/fort-smith-police-release-incident-report-mayor-calls-racist-vandalism-thoroughly-disgusting-act>

## November 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>27</b> Loose Change Sunday 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:00 PM Outreach Committee-P 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	<b>28</b> 9:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR 6:00 PM Boy Scouts-FH	<b>29</b> 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	<b>30</b> 4:00 PM Korean Worship Service 5:45 PM Handbell Practice 6:45 PM Choir Practice	<b>31</b> 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting -P 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	<b>1</b> <b>9:00 AM PW to host "Church Women United" - FH</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b> Back Pack Sunday <b>9:30 AM</b> Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:00 PM Worship Committee-P 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	<b>4</b> 9:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR 6:00 PM Boy Scouts-FH <b>6:00 PM</b> Citizens Climate Lobby	<b>5</b> 10:30 AM PW General Meeting-P 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	<b>6</b> 4:00 PM Korean Worship Service 5:45 PM Handbell Practice 6:45 PM Choir Practice	<b>7</b> 8:30 AM Merry Muffin Makers-FH/Kit. <b>6:00 PM</b> Overeaters Anonymous Meeting -P <b>6:30 PM</b> PACE 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:00 PM Building and Grounds Meeting 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service 3:00 PM 2nd Sunday Supper	<b>11</b> 9:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR 6:00 PM Boy Scouts-FH	<b>12</b> 10:00 AM Hannah Circle-Lib. 5:30 PM Esther Circle -Lib. 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	<b>13</b> 4:00 PM Korean Worship Service 5:45 PM Handbell Practice 6:45 PM Choir Practice	<b>14</b> 1:00 PM Retired Teachers -FH 5:30 PM Enneagram Fellowship - Lib. <b>6:00 PM</b> Overeaters Anonymous Meeting -P 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	<b>15</b> 6:00 PM School of the Arts Children's Choir Concert - FH	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:00 PM CE Committee Meeting-P 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	<b>18</b> 9:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR <b>10:45 AM</b> Book Club-Lib. 6:00 PM Boy Scouts-FH	<b>19</b> 12:00 PM Care Committee Meeting-WBK 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 6:00 PM Session Meeting-SR 6:00 PM Deacon's Meeting 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	<b>20</b> 4:00 PM Korean Worship Service 5:30 PM Bridges	<b>21</b> 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting -P <b>6:00 PM</b> Third Thursdays- FH 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> Loose Change Sunday 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:00 PM Outreach Committee-P 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	<b>25</b> 9:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR 6:00 PM Boy Scouts-FH	<b>26</b> 12:30 PM Knitting Group-Lib. 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	<b>27</b> 4:00 PM Korean Worship Service	<b>28</b> Office Closed 	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>