



Worship Service August 31st is our last 10:00am worship service for the summer. September 7th will begin our 11:00am worship service.

Sunday School Classes (Start September 14th @ 9:45am)

- The Shurley Class: meets in room 7
- Men's & Women's Class: meets in the library



CONTACT US...

Email us:

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Call us: **804-737-1527**

Office hours: **Monday - Thursday (8:30am - 1:30pm)**

Follow us on Facebook
@sandstonpc

Check out our website:
www.sandstonpc.org

A Note from Pastor Todd...

Does it matter to God how we dress for church?!

As you all have no doubt been able to discern as the years have gone by, my personality is such that I am 'made' to push back on rules and norms and the like. When I first started in youth ministry right out of college one of the ways that manifested itself was wearing shorts to church in the hottest Sundays of summer. In addition to the practicality of not sweating as much, I also adopted the following line of logic: "God doesn't care what I'm wearing to worship, God cares that I'm coming TO worship in the first place!" I quickly found out that members of the congregation disagreed with this thought process. It ended up being another time in my life where I learned that some 'battles' aren't really worth 'fighting'. As I continued my journey in church work I reached the point where I actually enjoyed dressing up for Sundays and took pride in looking for new suit and bowtie combinations...as you all well know, the more colorful the better! I did not, however, ever let go of the belief that attendance is in fact the most important part of Sunday morning. For starters, it is unfair to assume that everyone joining us for worship has the resources to afford what is objectively more expensive clothing for a mere hour or so of their week. In addition, at my core I want people to be comfortable in the sanctuary – physically as well as emotionally!

With all of this in mind, Pamela Lewis' recent article in The Christian Century – *Does God care what I wear to church?* - caught my attention. She approached this topic from the opposite side of my experience having grown up making dressing up for church a priority and then gradually relaxing her attitude – and clothing – and she got older. One of the things I appreciated about her article was the biblical focus and I thought it worth sharing some of it:

In the story of David's selection as Israel's king, God says, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7, all quotations KJV). While this passage speaks to physical appearance, it might be extended to refer to clothing as well.

The New Testament echoes this theme. Jesus repeatedly points to the "kingdom," where exterior earthly values such as wealth, power, and status have no place, a truth powerfully revealed in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus instructs his listeners to pay closer attention to what is essential and to place their trust in God, who will provide for them as he does for the "lilies of the field," which, though not grandly attired, surpass the glorious raiment of Solomon. The lilies are neither concerned about their appearance, nor do they labor to maintain it. In seeking first the kingdom of God, we will not worry about food, drink, or what to wear (Matt. 6:25–34). God knows, Jesus explains, that we are preoccupied with such concerns, which is why we need to look to the natural world as our example. Whenever I peer into my well-stocked closet and lament, "I have nothing to wear!" I am brought up short by these verses from Matthew's Gospel. I realize just how far I am from the lilies.

Clothing also appears in the book of James, where the writer tells of a rich man who, wearing a gold ring and in "goodly apparel," is well received and given the best seat, while a poor man in "vile raiment" is made to sit under the footstool (James 2:1-4). Those few verses tell us nothing about the quality of either man's heart, only that they are treated by others according to their apparel.

Eventually, she ends up not too far from where I did: we have a choice about how we present ourselves before God on Sunday mornings and that choice is an individual one that ultimately aligns with one of the foundational statements in the PC(USA): God alone is Lord of the conscience. Writes Lewis:

Ultimately, the question of whether God cares about what we wear in church cannot be answered definitively; God's mind is too vast and unknowable. And shifting norms for secular and church attire can send important messages about inclusivity and accessibility. But I still want to dress up for church. When we have a choice, our choice of clothes can convey our attitudes, our personal beliefs, and our sense of self. Once we have buttoned or zipped ourselves into them, the meanings we assign our clothes can even help us to navigate our interpersonal and professional milieus. I continue to think we shouldn't deliberately present ourselves sloppily dressed in God's house, but I also believe that when the last trumpet blows, we will not be judged for how we dressed. God will judge us according to how much we sought first the kingdom and considered the lilies.

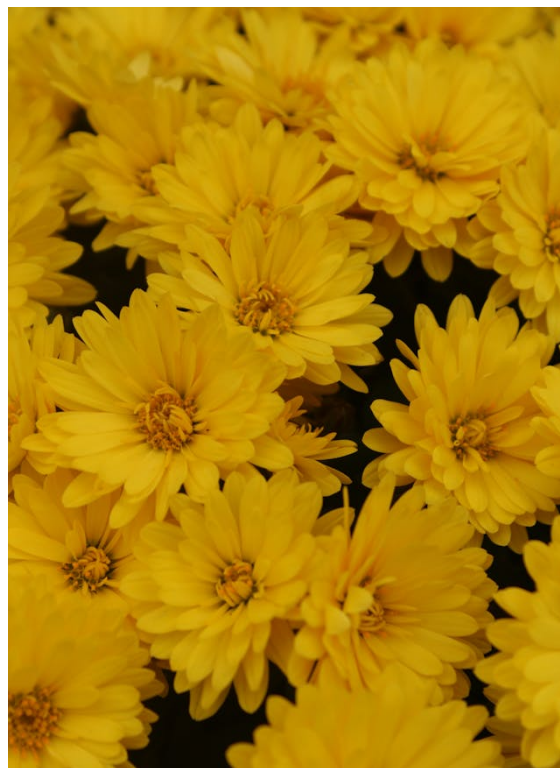
As I have mentioned in many a sermon, when Jesus is asked what the most important thing is, he keeps things pretty simple (and yet also very difficult) by saying, "Love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. And love your neighbor as yourself." So if you make it a priority to "dress to impress" on Sunday morning and then walk out of the sanctuary promptly forgetting about God for the remainder of the week, perhaps you need to re-read and think some more about what Jesus was saying is most important. I will continue to enjoy challenging myself to new bowtie and shirt combinations. And I will also continue to be glad you have joined us on Sunday morning – regardless of whether you're in a tie or dress or jeans. In my opinion, there should always be room for all of us.

Peace be with you,
Pastor Todd

Our Prayer List...

Please keep the following individuals below in your thoughts and prayers.

- Jane Monacell
- Elizabeth Breckinridge
- Marie Heath
- Laura Greer
- Joe Woodham
- Jan & Wayne Richter
- Leon App
- Joann & George McCabe
- Richard Young



“Welcome Back” Breakfast...

Come join us on **Sunday, September 7th at 9:00 am** in the Fellowship Hall for breakfast. The Men of the Church will be cooking pancakes & eggs this year and then we invite you all to bring sausage, bacon, casseroles, fruit, donuts etc to fill in! We hope to see you there!

Sunday school classes will get going for the year starting on **September 14th at 9:45 am**. The Men's & Women's class will be led by Arlo Amstutz and will finish studying the Book of Acts and go on to the Book of Job. The Shurley class will be

led by Bettie Kirkpatrick for the first few weeks and will be studying Confessions of Faith and then Shelor Smith and Patty Kelley will take over for the rest of the year teaching on the environment, women's rights, and any other topics that arise. Everyone is encouraged to come and find a class that interests you!



September Birthdays

5	Patty Kelley
10	Tyler Lucas
10	Max Oldham
14	Ron Wakeham
14	Shelley Row
16	Algis Radzisauskas
17	Ellsworth Row
22	Frank Ridout
24	John Oldham



PW Circle Meetings...

The PW circle meetings will start back up in September! This year, the Bible study will be on "Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ" by Rhashell D. Hunter. We will explore resilience. This is modeled for us by several biblical characters, gospel and epistle writers, as well as Jesus. So, what exactly is resilience? Resilience is the ability to spring back into shape and to adapt well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or stress—such as from family, relationships, health, workplace, and financial stressors. People who survive and thrive well in change are resilient. The Bible study is also about joy. How do we find joy in a chaotic world? Christian joy may be different from how a lot of people define joy. Joy is sometimes confused with happiness. For Christians, joy can occur while we are in the midst of difficult circumstances. Joy is the second fruit of the spirit, preceded by love and followed by peace (Gal 5:22-23). Trusting in God when we are in trying times can fill us with glorious joy and peace. We have joy in our suffering, because ultimately our joy is found in Jesus Christ. We will also seek to rediscover our identity. Identity is more than who we are or who we show ourselves to be. At its core, it points to our humanity. Our core identity is not found in our titles, our positions, our spouses, our partners, or our possessions. For Christians, our identity is found in Jesus Christ.

- The Finley-Walker Circle will be lead by Bettie Kirkpatrick and will meet on **Wednesday, September 10th at 10:00am** in the Finley Room.
- The Davis Circle will be lead by Judi Johnston and will meet on **Wednesday, September 10th at 6:00pm** in the Finley Room.

Just a reminder...
Sunday, September 7th Worship service
goes back to 11:00am.



Flower Calendar Requests 2025...

We only have a few dates left for the flower calendar for 2025! You can find the request forms outside of the office as well as the narthex of the church. The cost of the flowers is \$35.00. You will find the available dates right below.

September – 14 & 21
October – 5, 19, & 26

PW: World Food Day Collection

World Food Day has been a tradition in the United States since the first World Food Day in 1982. The Presbyterian Women have chosen to give our donations of food and money to support the Henrico County Christmas Mother

Program since we have a long-standing connection with them. **On Sunday, October 12th everyone is encouraged to bring canned goods or to give monetary donations.** Checks **MUST** be made out to "Henrico Christmas Mother" that way it will go directly to this program to purchase food. With their help and connections our dollars will go much farther to help those in need during the holidays.

The **Daily Bread Devotionals** are here for *September, October, & November!* You can find them in the church narthex on the table or in the Education Building on the shelf next to office. Take as many as you need.



Meetings this month...

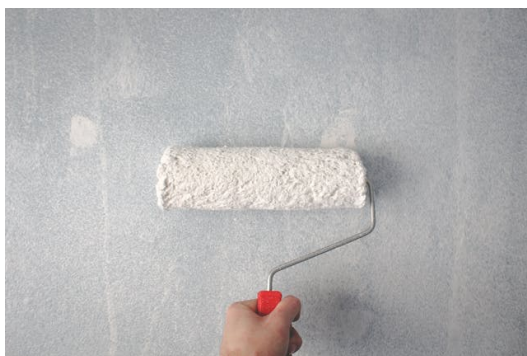
The Beekeepers of Richmond will meet on **Tuesday, September 2nd from 7pm to 9pm**. If you have an interest in bees this may be the place for you. If you have any questions please contact Arlo Amstutz.

The Highland Springs Garden Club will meet on **Tuesday, September 16th from 10am to 12:30pm** in the fellowship hall. Anyone who loves *flowers or arranging flowers is encouraged to come and join us. If you have any questions please contact Pat Fitzgerald.*

Update: Sanctuary Painting...

With the windows having been replaced last October it is now time for painting the Sanctuary, both inside and outside. The Session approved the expenditure of \$22,000.00 for painting the Sanctuary, W.W. Nash of Richmond as the chosen painting contractor. We expect the painting to start sometime within the next 30 days or so as no schedule has been set. During the time of painting the interior, it is expected that services will need to be held in the Fellowship Hall for one or two Sundays as the pews will need to be removed and scaffolding use to paint the ceiling. I am looking forward to having a fresh new look to the Sanctuary and leaving behind the white plaster repairs throughout the interior.

Facilities Committee
Arlo Amstutz



What's going on in our community...

Eastern Henrico FISH

We are collecting toilet paper for the month of September for FISH. Please remember to pick up one or two packs while you are out grocery shopping. There is a box outside of the church office that you can drop your donations off in. The deadline is September 28th. For the month of August we were able to collect 980+ school supply items for FISH. Thank you to everyone for your support each month!



September Activity Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 7pm – 9pm Beekeepers of Richmond Meeting	3	4	5	6
7 9:00am Welcome Back Breakfast 11:00am Worship Service & Communion	8	9	10 10am Finley- Walker Circle Meeting 6pm Davis Circle Meeting	11	12	13
14 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service	15	16 10am- 12:30pm Highland Springs Garden Club	17	18	19	20
21 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service	22 First Day of Fall	23	24	25	26	27
28 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service FISH Donation Deadline	29	30				

