



Sandston Presbyterian Church Newsletter September 2026

Worship Service September 6th is our last 10:00am worship service for the summer. September 13th will begin our 11:00am worship service.

Sunday School Classes (Start September 20th @ 9:45am)

- The Shurley Class: meets in room 7
- Senior Walker 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)**

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@sandstonpc

Check out our website:
www.sandstonpc.org



God is already present!

I've told this story before in a sermon but it bears repeating in the context of this note. When I was at Three Chopt we had a relationship with a group in Haiti. My own faith was certainly expanded in the context of the two visits I made during my time there. At any rate, the head of staff at Three Chopt made a great observation one time in talking about trips down. She observed how often when you boarded the plane to fly down you would see groups from other churches and denominations also on board. In particular she was struck by the group all wearing matching t-shirt with the slogan "Taking Jesus to Haiti". I could certainly spend the rest of this time deconstructing the problematic missional theology in that message. However I will simply share her very astute observation: "Doesn't that somehow imply that Jesus...and by extension God...isn't already in Haiti?"

I was reminded of this when reading one of Sarah Bessey's e-news writings in a series titled *Unlikely Spiritual Practices*. Specifically she points out that often times we approach spiritual practices or devotional time with the idea that we are doing so "so God will show up or be present". Here are her thoughts about that"

Another confession: all too often in my own life, I've treated spiritual practices like incantations to summon God's presence, grace, and goodness. I mean, in some ways that actually is what I was taught in the prosperity gospel/Word of Faith movements of the 80s and 90s so it is not a huge surprise that I believed it. If we prayed and interceded and worshipped hard enough, God would SHOW UP and LOVE US and MAKE REVIVAL HAPPEN.

Spiritual practices aren't going to make God love you more. They aren't summoning God like a retriever. They certainly aren't ringing the dinner bell for God's provision to come running in abundance. Whatever you do or don't do does not invoke God's presence like a deity at a temple.

Why?

Because God is already here. There isn't anywhere you've been and there isn't anywhere you're going where you're not at home in God's love. The wilderness is home to God, even the wilderness inside you. Your life is already a place where God is quite at home.

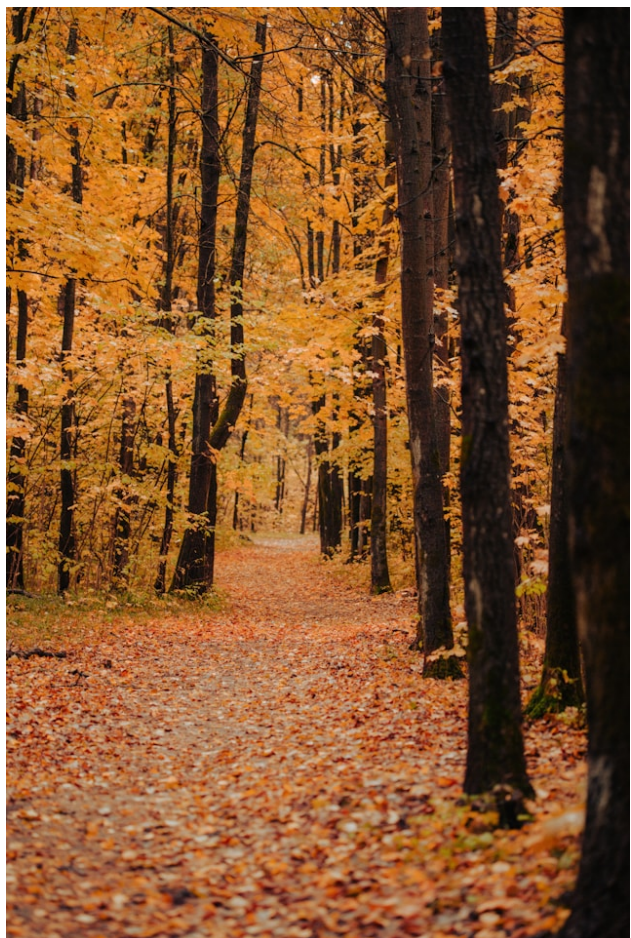
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Our practices do not manufacture God's presence. They can cultivate our awareness of it. They can develop habits of faithfulness in us. They can remind us of what is true. They can orient us towards our best hopes. They can create space for the cultivation of the fruit of the Spirit in us. But they aren't magic and they don't earn you any of God's love.

Perhaps this is another reason why I increasingly prefer the language of practice over discipline. It reminds me that faith is less about achieving holiness than participating in God's ongoing work of healing the world.

We are not trying to become worthy of grace; we are learning to live as though grace is already true.

That sort of truth changes everything because it means we can approach prayer with curiosity instead of anxiety, scripture with humility instead of certainty, community with openness instead of suspicion, justice with hope instead of despair, and every other unlikely and unexpected place in our life is also a place of encounter. And we can relate to God with trust instead of fear.



In the end, whether we choose the language of disciplines or practices is less important than the God we believe those words reveal. If our spirituality makes us more compassionate, more courageous, more hospitable, more honest, more committed to the flourishing of our neighbors and this beautiful, wounded world, then we are walking in the footsteps of Jesus.

May we all be reminded there is nothing we can do for or with God to make us any more loved or worthy in God's eyes. We are already so because we are created and loved by God. Amen and amen.

Peace be with you,
Pastor Todd

Our Prayer List...

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

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



"Welcome Back" Breakfast...

Come join us on **Sunday, September 13th at 9:00 am** in the Fellowship

Hall for a potluck breakfast. We invite you all to bring sausage, bacon, casseroles, pancakes, fruit, donuts etc! We hope to see you there!!!



Sunday school classes will get going for the year starting on **September 20th at 9:45 am**. The Senior Walker class will be led by Arlo Amstutz and are not sure what they will be studying as of now. The Shurley class will be led by Mary Hamilton and they will continue studying the book of Isaiah. Everyone is encouraged to come and find a class that interests you!

PW Circle Meetings...

The PW circle meetings will start back up in September! This year, the Bible study will be on "United Through Christ, Bound to Each Other" by Rhonda Mawhood Lee.

Paul wrote at a time when Christians expected Jesus' imminent return; he challenged his friends to be ready when that day came. Two thousand years later, the church is still waiting, still affirming that Jesus will return, and still proclaiming that this world has already been transformed by God's life-giving love. Our challenge remains to live in ways that demonstrate our trust in the resurrection. Many of the questions asked by our earliest siblings in faith remain ours, too. How can our lives demonstrate our trust in Jesus Christ's victory over death? What do we do when different understandings of the gospel undermine church unity? How can Christians understand gender and sexuality? When conflict arises, how do we deal with it?

This Bible study will raise many questions while providing few direct answers. Those, you will seek yourself through prayerful reading, thinking, and discussion. I pray that unity in Jesus Christ will guide you and your study group and inspire you, together, to do everything in love.

- The Finley-Walker Circle will meet on **Wednesday, September 9th at 10:00am.**
- The Davis Circle will meet on **Wednesday, September 9th at 6:00pm.**



Just a reminder...

Sunday, September 13th Worship service
goes back to 11:00am.



Flower Calendar Requests 2026...

We only have a few dates left for the flower calendar for 2026! 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 - 13, 20, & 27
 October - 4 & 25
 November - 1, 8, & 15

YMCA MEI Collection...

The **YMCA has a Mission, Equity, and Inclusion (MEI)** Committee that has a walk up food pantry at the Chickahominy location right here in Sandston. They are in need of protein items, so the Christian Life committee will be collecting **canned tuna** for their food pantry for the **month of September**. Please put these items in the box for YMCA outside of the church office and Anna Helen will deliver them at the end of the month!

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.



What's going on in our community...

Eastern Henrico FISH

We are collecting cereal for the month of September for FISH. Please remember to pick up a box or two 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 30th. For the month of August we were able to collect 22+ canned greens for FISH. Thank you to everyone for your support each month!

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



Meetings this month...

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.

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 11th 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.



September Activity Calendar

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

