



# FRIENDSHIP

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

small church | BIG MISSION



### September 2020

The beloved author and Presbyterian minister Frederick Buechner once wrote some words that have stayed with me for a long time about the role of doubt in the life of faith. He said, “Whether your faith is that there is a God or that there is not a God, if you don’t have any doubts you are either kidding yourself or asleep.” But then in the same breath, he adds something remarkable: “*Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving.*”

What an image! So, doubt in the life of faith can be *good*?! Many of us were taught as young people that we should just put away our doubts ... that we should just *believe*, and if that starts becoming hard, then we should just try harder! Many of us were taught that whatever the question was that life posed, that the Bible has the answer, and that once you had it, you tell yourself, “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it!”

I don’t mean to make light of someone’s beliefs if that’s where you are. I would only push back to allow for another possibility. Because you see, my experience has been completely different. I have traveled a road that has taught me that my striving for an authentic faith *requires* the risk of less than complete certainty. It *demand*s that I live in that wild, forbidding space between the way the world *is* and the way it *should be*. In a sense, my life in faith *needs* my doubts. It *needs* my uncertainty. It *needs* my anguished cries to what sometimes seems like a silent Heaven. Or as Buechner put it somewhere else, “If there were no room for doubt, there would be no room for me.”

I think that what many fear about allowing doubt – even questioning *God* – is that it might halt the faith journey. And there is a form of doubt which can do this – giving us license to focus only on ourselves and our own hurt, and to give way to cynicism and despair. But there is also doubt which keeps a conversation – a relationship – alive, even as we acknowledge uncertainty. It can be a summons to journey *further*, to dig *deeper*, to seek the truth about ourselves, to grow even when it hurts ... and never finally to let go of the hope that the One whose face we seek is our ultimate Destiny, the Home which awaits us.

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706-543-6077 (office)  
706-543-6199 (fax)  
[www.gotofriendship.org](http://www.gotofriendship.org)

Sunday Worship @ 11:00 a.m.  
ONLINE  
[www.GoToFriendship.org](http://www.GoToFriendship.org)

Pastor:  
Rev. J. Thomas Buchanan  
[pastortom@gotofriendship.org](mailto:pastortom@gotofriendship.org)

Church Administrator:  
Donna Rigsby  
[office@gotofriendship.org](mailto:office@gotofriendship.org)

Please check out our website @  
[www.gotofriendship.org](http://www.gotofriendship.org) for our  
online calendar





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This season through which we have been living over the last several months – and which threatens to continue for some time longer – has tested us, and it continues to do so. Many of us are just tired. We all want life to go back to the way it was. We may even have entertained thoughts – doubts? – about God and life and faith. And that's OK. What we are feeling or thinking is perfectly normal – we'd be super-human if we didn't live in that space at least sometimes.

But here's some Good News: We're in this together, for the long haul. I'm not walking away. And you're not walking away. We're *family*, and whatever or whoever brought us together, we know that we do not make this journey of faith – in the face of doubt – alone. We are a community of *real* people who have covenanted to be support for the weary ... to be encouragement along the way ... to be life to and for one another. It can sometimes feel like a wandering through a wilderness, but even when it does, we may discover God's gracious provision if we are true to one another. And when this happens, we may discover a Strength not our own, a Love able to sustain us, and heal us, and bring us home.

Grateful to be on the Journey with You,  
Tom Buchanan



Worship continues each Sunday – completely online! ***If you are on our church e-mail list, you will now receive an email in your inbox early on Sunday morning with a direct link to the worship service!*** Or, if you wish, you can still simply go to our web site [GoToFriendship.org](http://GoToFriendship.org) and scroll down for the graphic link to it. An archive of past worship service videos and printed sermons are available from the “Sermons and Newsletters” page of our web site.

### Sunday Morning Coffee & Fellowship and Tuesday Morning Bible Study

On Sunday mornings at 9:30 AM, we gather online on Zoom, for fellowship and conversation on the scriptures being read in online worship for the day! Tuesday morning Bible study on Zoom also continues each week at 10:30 AM. If you would like to join in either or both of these opportunities, please send an email to [PastorTom@GoToFriendship.org](mailto:PastorTom@GoToFriendship.org) ... and you'll be added to the Zoom invitation lists each week.



Pray in the Sanctuary

The Sanctuary is available - by appointment for 30 minute increments - on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday between 9:00 AM and 1:30 PM for prayer and meditation. Please contact Donna if you would like to make such an appointment.



## Session Notes

Submitted by Leanne Vaeth

- Session approved the Preschool's 2020-2021 budget based upon 92 registered students. The number of students is likely to shift for the next few months as schools reopen. The budget has a forecasted shortfall of approximately \$10k. The church continues to see strong income and below normal expenses. Instructions are still forthcoming from the SBA and Oconee State Bank on documentation to close out the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan.
- The NEGA Presbytery met on August 15<sup>th</sup> via Zoom. Pastor Tom and Leanne Vaeth attended the meeting which included the ordination of a new Pastor and a vote to affirm a statement on social justice.
- A discussion on what reopening might look like included ideas on outdoor or drive in services. Members will be asked for feedback on the likelihood of their attending services outside in the Stancil Garden. Indoor services and group singing are still not planned. Online services will still be posted.
- An ACTS food drive in support of our mission work will be started again in September. It may be led by a Scout or a church member.
- The Preschool held an open house and meet your teacher session for families. Reopening is Monday, August 17th. Pastor Tom recognized Preschool Director Susanne Hayes for all her diligence in organizing and communicating information regarding reopening the preschool.
- The Forum @ Friendship August session will feature Nan McMurry on The Inoculation Controversy of 1721.



### Midweek Devotional

Join us on the church Facebook page each Wednesday at 12 noon ... [www.facebook.com/FriendshipPresbyterianChurch](https://www.facebook.com/FriendshipPresbyterianChurch) or just link to Facebook from our web site [GoToFriendship.org](http://GoToFriendship.org) ... for a live-streamed Midweek Devotional, with scripture, encouragement, and prayer. If you miss it live, you can always catch it later by going to the Facebook page. **Please note that you do NOT need to have a Facebook account to view the Midweek Devotion.**



### Giving to the Church

Online giving is available on our web site! This is an easy, safe, and secure way to make donations to the church, without having to go to the trouble of writing and mailing a check. Simply go to our web site [GoToFriendship.org](http://GoToFriendship.org) and scroll to the bottom and click on **Give Now**. Doing so will take you to a secure portal where you will be asked to create a simple profile, and then allow you to make donations through your bank account or debit or credit card!



If you have any updates  
or additional prayer  
requests,  
please notify an Elder or  
the Church Office.

- Jane Towles
- Rosemary Salter
- Rhenn Priep
- Elizabeth Broomfield
- Grace Hawn
- Laurelyn Glick
- Brian Muise
- Roy and Doots Stephens
- Rick Inglin
- Fred Essenwein (friend of Dori Allen—  
metastatic melanoma)
- Lydia Hood (daughter of Marks and Jane  
Towles)
- Pendley Family (family lost home, cars, and  
all possessions in a house fire on June 29)
- Desmond Goergen (great grandson of Bev  
Davis)
- Mum and Reggie (friends of Lisa Buchanan)
- LMHB (dear friend of Lisa Buchanan)
- Nancy Adams (Sarah Bennett's niece -  
cancer)
- Richard Weber (loss of his wife Diane - Kathy  
Roberts' best friend)
- Andrea Williams (throat cancer)
- Skylar Kirkpatrick (granddaughter of Bev  
Davis)
- Jennifer Mitchell
- Jim Miller (Bev Davis' friend - melanoma)
- Donald Clem (Donna Rigsby's dad -  
Alzheimer's)



**PRESBYTERIAN  
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is the PC(USA)'s disaster response program. PDA works with partners around the globe to support those impacted by natural or human-caused disasters. The latest disaster was the hurricane that went through Texas and Louisiana. If you wish to donate to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to help those affected by Hurricane Laura, you can mail or drop off a check to the church office, payable to Friendship Presbyterian Church and earmarked for PDA.



# Prayer Shawl Ministry

Calling all yarn crafters. In this day and age of self-isolation it is more important than ever that we reach out to our community and let them know we are thinking of them and praying for them. The Prayer Shawl Ministry was formed In 1998 for this very purpose and I hope to build such a ministry at FPC. If you are interested in participating or would like more information please contact me at [emhbuchanan1674@gmail.com](mailto:emhbuchanan1674@gmail.com)



The Session has organized all members and friends of Friendship Church into "Care Groups," with each Session member having pastoral responsibility for about six or seven households. They will reach out to you regularly going forward in love and concern.

If you or someone you know needs help of any kind - practical, spiritual, or emotional - please let us know, either by talking with the Elder who is assigned to you and your family, or by contacting Pastor Tom directly: [PastorTom@GoToFriendship.org](mailto:PastorTom@GoToFriendship.org) or by phone, 404-729-2144.




**PRESCHOOL**  
Page  
*Susanne Hayes, Director*

# Back to School Friendship Preschool





### Scouting at Friendship

By: Scoutmaster Paul Matthews

Troop 149 has been “easing back” into in-person meetings and activities (with masks, social distancing, and outdoor settings) this month. During August, we had several outdoor troop meetings (interspersed with Zoom ones), with instruction for merit badges including Art, Communication, and Personal Fitness. We are hoping to hold an outdoor “court of honor” at the end of September, to recognize Scouts for all the merit badges, ranks, and special awards earned over the past year (since we had to cancel our March ceremony). At the end of August, we had 12 Scouts and adults work on the Canoeing merit badge, camping at Camp Rotary on Lake Hartwell.

Our Scouts have also been undertaking several service projects, including re-mulching the preschool playground and digging out and reinstalling the pea-gravel pathway between the education wing and the playground. Coming up in September, another Scout will be leading the removal of items from the preschool yard shed, too, and several other project ideas are in process.

Under the leadership of our newly elected youth leaders (including Senior Patrol Leader Teddy V.), we have been working on developing the program calendar for the coming months, with the hopes that fewer cancellations and changes of plan will be needed this year. Planned camping trips include a weekend in September with Troop 537 at the Hardigree Wildlife center; backpacking; wilderness survival; fishing; shooting sports; tubing; and a trip to the Okefenokee Swamp! Popcorn sales are underway as the national BSA fundraiser, to help Scouts pay for these activities, and we hope to also schedule events such as the pancake breakfast and chicken BBQ. Some of the Scout council and district events are still in question for the fall, including recruitment events, Order of the Arrow weekends and the fall Advance-a-Rama merit badge workday.

The Cub Scout Pack is also gearing back up for fall activities and meetings, with a tentative “welcome back” event on Sept. 17 and individual Den meetings being scheduled, including at Harris Shoals Park.

As always, thanks for your continued support of the Troop and Pack!



Personal Fitness merit badge



Scouts cooking breakfast on our campout



Mulching at the playground



Gravel path completed



<b>Giving in August</b>				
	Week of August 2	Week of August 9	Week of August 16	Week of August 23
General Giving	\$974.00	\$8435.00	\$753.80	\$1302.00

<b>Friendship Presbyterian Church</b>	
<b>Year-To-Date Through July 2020</b>	
Selected Assets and Liabilities	
Cash in Bank -- General Fund	\$44927.72
Cash in Bank --Restricted Fund	<u>13583.91</u>
Total Cash in Bank	\$58511.63
Restricted Educational Funds	
Savings -- New Covenant Securities	\$49876.03
Income Statement Summary	
Receipts from Congregation	\$7764.80
Dye House Rent	0.00
Support from Preschool	2960.75
All Other Income	<u>3.03</u>
Total Receipts	<u>\$10728.58</u>
Administration Expenses	
Personnel Expenses	14592.92
Membership Development & Care Expenses	0.00
Discipleship/CE	200.00
Mission/Bldg & Grounds Expenses	435.00
Worship Expenses	<u>0.00</u>
Total Operating Expenses	<u>\$19312.29</u>
Net Income / (Deficit)	
	(\$8583.71)





# SEPTEMBER 2020

*Names in red-birthdays*  
*Names in green-anniversaries*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>30</b> <i>Bruce Hildebrand</i> <b>9:30 AM</b> Sunday Morning Coffee & Fellowship - via ZOOM <b>11:00 AM</b> Worship Service-ONLINE	<b>31</b> <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only <b>7:00 PM</b> Boy Scout Troop 149	<b>1</b> <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only <b>10:30 AM</b> Adult Bible Study - via ZOOM	<b>2</b> <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only	<b>3</b> <b>10:30 AM</b> NEGA Nominating Committee	<b>4</b> Church Office Closed	<b>5</b> <i>Chester Lee</i>
<b>6</b> <i>Gail Wiley</i> <b>9:30 AM</b> Adult Sunday School <b>11:00 AM</b> Worship Service	<b>7</b>  Church Office / Preschool Closed <b>7:00 PM</b> Boy Scout Troop 149	<b>8</b> <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only	<b>9</b> <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Church Office Closed	<b>12</b> <i>Leon &amp; Doris Allen</i>
<b>13</b> <b>9:30 AM</b> Adult Sunday School <b>11:00 AM</b> Worship Service	<b>14</b> <i>Don &amp; Kathy Roberts</i> <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only <b>7:00 PM</b> Boy Scout Troop 149	<b>15</b> <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only	<b>16</b> <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only	<b>17</b> <b>7:00 PM</b> Pack Meeting	<b>18</b> Church Office Closed	<b>19</b> <i>Wynn Ivy</i>
<b>20</b> <i>Tom Buchanan</i> <b>9:30 AM</b> Adult Sunday School <b>11:00 AM</b> Worship Service <b>12:00 PM</b> Stated Session Meeting via ZOOM	<b>21</b> <i>Maurice &amp; Caren Snook</i> <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only <b>7:00 PM</b> Boy Scout Troop 149	 <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only	<b>23</b> <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only	<b>24</b> <i>Garrett Hibbs</i>	<b>25</b> Church Office Closed	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> <b>9:30 AM</b> Adult Sunday School <b>11:00 AM</b> Worship Service	<b>28</b> <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only <b>7:00 PM</b> Boy Scout Troop 149	<b>29</b> <i>Don Harris</i> <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only	<b>30</b> <i>Amy Ivy</i> <b>9:00 AM</b> Open Sanctuary - by appointment only	<b>1</b> <b>6:00 PM</b> Den Meeting	<b>2</b> Church Office Closed	<b>3</b>

Please submit news for September's Newsletter to the church office no later than **Sunday, September 27, 2020.**

Due to office schedule submissions after this date may not appear in next month's newsletter.

All submissions are subject to editing.



As each part does its own special work,  
*it helps the other parts grow,*  
so that the whole body is healthy and growing  
*and full of love.*

EPHESIANS 4:16, NLT

#### **FRIENDSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT**

**As followers of Jesus Christ, assured of God's unconditional love for everyone, we strive to be an accepting and joyful community that centers upon worship, encourages personal growth, celebrates diversity, nurtures individual gifts, and moves beyond boundaries to share, through service, Jesus' love, compassion, and justice in an uncertain world.**

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Grace to you and peace, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Friendship Presbyterian Church  
8531 Macon Highway  
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