



Holbrook Begins Service as Interim Presbyter and Stated Clerk

It is with great joy that I embrace the opportunity to serve Presbytery of the James as interim general presbyter and stated clerk. Since the time of my candidacy and care under what is now Presbytery of the Peaks, I have been convinced that our polity and form of government are a good and faithful structure through which we can do the work of ministry.

While completing the training for interim general presbyter, I spent time in prayer and reflection, alone and with colleagues, seeking to discern God's will for my next vocational step within our beloved denomination.

I rejoice in the worship and work that take place within the realm of this council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and I promise to faithfully serve among you, with God's help.

Growing up in the Shenandoah Valley and serving the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic through Massanetta Springs, I am familiar with the region and its opportunities.

I realize the diversity of villages, towns, and



Fred (back row, second from left) and Laura Holbrook are happy to be in Presbytery of the James where their adult children live.

*Grace to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*

Philippians 1:2

cities within POJ and am quite comfortable with the range of small to large churches. My years with the conference center afforded me opportunity to participate and facilitate strategic planning with teams of persons who are

gifted and able from within the synod and its presbyteries.

Knowing that strategic planning is a key focus of the work of the interim GP and SC, I am comfortable with my skills while being humbly aware of my shortcomings. I embrace the value of the gifts others bring that will help POJ as it "moves from the past, through the present, and into the future."

Let me join the many voices who are expressing thanksgiving and gratitude for the ministry of Carson Rhyne. I promise to protect his retirement but I accept his kind offer to be available to answer questions as I enter this office.

I am enjoying our time together and promise that I am praying for you just as I know you are praying for me and my work with and among you. May God bless POJ!

In Christ's service,

Fred A. Holbrook
Interim General Presbyter and Stated Clerk

Stewardship Associate Offers Adult Sunday School Class

Dr. Deborah Rexrode, associate for stewardship for Presbytery of the James, has designed a four-week Sunday school class or small group series that she is offering to lead in your congregation.

The series is titled "Creating a Culture of Generosity." Each week addresses one of these themes:

- Learning generosity from other generations
- Lessons on generosity from the Scriptures
- Living abundantly
- Leaving a legacy

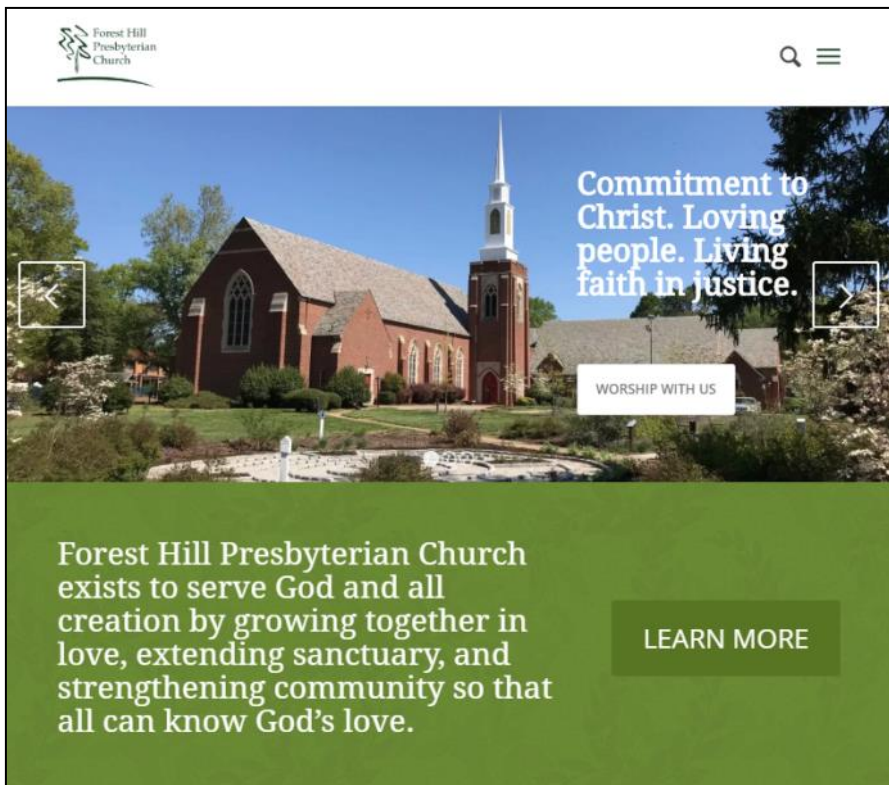


Dr. Deborah Rexrode

The class invites participants to engage in conversation about Stewardship as a way of life, so it's perfect for any time of the year. It also can work for any size congregation.

Rexrode has shared this class with Second Church, Richmond; First Church, Charlottesville; and Providence Gum Spring Church. She most recently wrapped up a session at Sandston Church.

Invite Rexrode to your congregation by contacting her at deborah@presbyteryofthejames.org or (434) 996-6032.



Forest Hill PC Launches New Website with POJ Grant

Forest Hill Presbyterian Church (FHPC) has launched a new website, fhpcrichmond.org, thanks to a small church grant from Presbytery of the James (POJ). The new site is visually appealing, rich in content, and user friendly to attract and inform visitors and members alike.

Good websites are critical for modern communication. Three of five new church members report using search engines and other websites to find a church home, shared marketing executive Dave Saunders at POJ's workshop on March 13. He also commented that four of five new church members listed a church's website as an important factor in joining.

Lack of knowledge and financial resources kept the church from replacing their stale and unengaging former website. Two POJ resources helped make the new site possible.

A \$1,000 grant from POJ's small church grant program matched with \$1,000 of church funds allowed Forest Hill to hire a summer intern and purchase access to an improved website platform and software.

John Vest, evangelism professor at Union Presbyterian Seminary and POJ's evangelism associate, recommended a web designer, UPSem student Linda Kurtz.

After five months, FHPC has a bigger and better online presence to raise its profile in the community.

The new website promotes the church's child care center, free concerts, dog park, labyrinth, and flower garden. Church leaders hope the site inspires neighbors and members of the community, near and far, to worship with them and grow in spirit and service to others.

COLLEGIATE MINISTRIES

Virginia State University Ministry Feeds Bodies and Souls

Feeding needy neighbors is an important part of the outreach mission of the United Campus Ministry FLOW Wesley Foundation at Virginia State University (VSU).

In addition to continuing to assist the Chesterfield County Food Bank with distributing groceries, students have begun serving meals at the Downtown Churches United Hope Center in Petersburg and the Totty House in Ettrick.

New initiatives, such as weekly prayer gatherings and monthly fasts, give students fresh ways to be involved in their faith and their community.

"We also have new student ministries including Pinky Promise led by junior Jneva Norfleet and the Men of Troy led by VSU sophomore Calvin Redmond," shared Rev. Delano Douglas, campus ministry director.

Named FLOW for its emphasis on faith, love, outreach, and worship, the program has an average of 118 students attend worship services at nearby Ettrick United Methodist Church each Sunday afternoon.



A student helps prepare meals through a FLOW outreach ministry.



VSU students distribute groceries to Ettrick residents on Saturday mornings.

To learn more about VSU's FLOW ministry and how you or your congregation can support it, visit facebook.com/UCMFLOW or vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/campus-ministry.

“Ask, Thank, Tell” Author to Lead March Stewardship Event

On March 23, Presbytery of the James and the Virginia Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church will join together to host a workshop based on the book “Ask, Thank, Tell: Improving Stewardship Ministry in Your Congregation.”

Author Charles “Chick” Lane, pastor for stewardship and generosity at Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Maple Grove, Minnesota, will be our presenter.



Rev. Charles Lane

Lane believes that too often Stewardship has been kidnapped and is being held hostage by a sinister villain named “Paying the Bills.” He will make the case that:

- Stewardship really is all about discipleship.
- Stewardship ministry is centered on three simple verbs – ask, thank, tell.
- Stewardship leaders should be free to do Stewardship ministry so that God’s people might experience joy in giving generously.

Are you part of the Stewardship team for your congregation? Do you need a Stewardship team for your congregation?

Are you the “new” leader of the Stewardship Ministry for your congregation? If you answered “yes” to any of these, you will want to attend!

The event is 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Three Chopt Presbyterian Church in Henrico. Tickets are \$15 each. Visit presbyteryofthejames.com to register.

For more information, contact Deborah Rexrode, associate for stewardship, at deborah@presbyteryofthejames.org or (434) 996-6032.

Summit Church Celebrates 35th Anniversary

On April 15, Summit Church in Stafford, Virginia celebrated the 35th anniversary of its chartering. Out of the 124 original charter members, fourteen were present.

Chartering minister Rev. Carson Rhyne gave the sermon at both services that day with assistance from Rev. Jackie Reed Hall who was a teenage member at the time of the chartering in 1983.

The day celebrated the church’s past, present, and future. A charter member gave a presentation showing the church’s beginnings and events of past years. A large bulletin board in the narthex displayed letters and photographs of Summit’s former ministers and some charter members who could not attend the celebration.

Current pastor Rev. Dan Hrach selected for the Affirmation of Faith a statement that was approved by the PC(USA) for the Book of Confessions in 1983, the charter year.

The actual chartering day, March 27, 1983, was memorable, as it poured down rain. When the congregation left the church, the rain stopped and a large rainbow filled the sky. This so moved the members that they created a rainbow-wall hanging which graced the sanctuary for years and hung wallpaper with Noah’s Ark and rainbows in the church nursery.

Remembering this, the 35th anniversary bulletin featured a rainbow on its cover. The fellowship hall was decorated with a



Member Justine Somers, who vividly recalled the nursery wallpaper from her childhood, created a rainbow-decorated cake for a luncheon after the worship services.

rainbow of colorful flowers. God’s love has been prevalent throughout Summit’s past and present. The congregation is assured that God’s love, joy, and peace will continue in its future.



The service recognized fourteen charter members in attendance.

The Vine

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3218 Chamberlayne Ave. Richmond, VA 23227
office@presbyteryofthejames.org

UPCOMING PRESBYTERY MEETINGS

February 16, 2019 Three Chopt Church, Richmond
June 18, 2019 INVITATION NEEDED
October 19, 2019..... INVITATION NEEDED

This issue of *The Vine* especially prepared for

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Madison Church Earns Earth Care Designation

Madison Church has been certified by the Presbyterian Church (USA) as an Earth Care Congregation.

The designation is awarded to churches who take an Earth Care Pledge and complete activities and projects in the fields of worship, education, facilities, and outreach.

Located in rural Madison, Virginia, this small congregation has had an active Green Team since 2007. Early projects include offering recycling bins at the church and publishing “Green Tips” for energy and resource conservation in the monthly church newsletter.

As interest in caring for God's creation increased over the years, the Green Team and the Session felt called in 2018 to affirm the Earth Care Pledge to integrate environmental practices and thinking into all facets of church life and to formally apply for certification.

Since then, efforts have become even more intentional.

For this year's Palm Sunday service the church purchased palms grown and harvested in ways that protect the rain forests. The eco-palms also provide Fair Trade income for the growers and harvesters. Because the minimum order was more than the Madison church needed, the palms were shared with another congregation, thereby helping to educate others.

The church conserves resources through practices such as having double-paned windows and CFL bulbs, performing HVAC checkups twice per year, and decreasing the use of disposable materials.

This summer, the Green Team met with the Madison County administrator and visited a recycling processing center to better understand and coordinate recycling procedures in the county.

All these activities and many more are an outgrowth of the church's mission statement, “Bringing God's Love and Hope to Life”.



The church maintains a columbarium, providing an opportunity for members to consider cremation and inurnment of ashes on the church grounds as an alternative to cemetery burial, and as a way to practice responsible financial and ecological stewardship.



The Green Team partners with Christian Education to provide elements of Earth Care during vacation Bible school.



Outings help participants learn about geology, native plants, and habitat preservation.

Find out how your church can become an Earth Care Congregation at presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment. The annual application period is January 1 through February 15.