

Jim's Corner, February 2025

**As we move into a new year together, I have been thinking about not only Seven Oaks but our denomination as well. Sometimes we make life hard on ourselves by simply not understanding who we are as Presbyterians. Last June and July, our General Assembly met and passed some Overtures (changes to our Book of Order). This happens every two years. At our meeting of Trinity Presbytery in February, we will be voting on these Overtures. I can make these Overtures available to any of the SOPC members upon request.**

**All of that being said, I want to share with you the following "Preface" that I have used over the years when conducting Elder training and I think it gives us a brief idea of who we are as Presbyterians. Should any of you like to discuss the following, I would be delighted to have that conversation.**

### **BEING PRESBYTERIAN**

The Presbyterian Church is governed by a representational, constitutional form of government. We have a two-part Constitution: part one is The Book of Confessions and part two is the Book of Order. At the foundation of our church government is the conviction that groups and bodies are best governed by leaders elected from that body. So, each congregation is governed by Ruling Elders and Deacons who are elected by the congregation. Each congregation is governed as a part of a Presbytery [Trinity Presbytery] that is made up of Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders [ministers] that represent every congregation. Even our highest governing body — The General Assembly — is made up of Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders from every Presbytery in our denomination.

There is no "they" in Presbyterian Polity — only "us". Presbyterians link themselves together to pursue larger ministries like colleges, seminaries, missionary support and curriculum development. Each congregation sends money to every higher level of Presbyterian government, not because we must but because we may. We choose to link ourselves together because we believe that the discernment of God's purpose and Word are best done in community.

It doesn't mean that all Presbyterians agree — far from it! But it means that all Presbyterians acknowledge that no one person speaks for God. In the history of the church, the Reformed/Presbyterian Churches rejected the idea that there could ever be a "pope" — one person who speaks for God. We rejected that idea because we believe in human sin. Even in our best deeds and clearest moments, we are human beings blinded by our own prejudices and limited in our understanding.

So, Presbyterians set up a system of government that requires accountability and creates community. The fruit of this sort of government is amazing. But the work of being connectional is very hard. It would be easier, in some ways, to be an independent congregation. Just as marriage is a commitment to community and requires hard work, so also connectional church life requires a commitment and hard work. But in an age and culture that values the freedom of the individual and individual rights above most everything else, I think that the Presbyterian Church has an important witness and voice to bring to the debate.

Our unity is a gift from God earned by Christ's death and resurrection. I am proud to be united with folks who are different from me. I need them and they need me to witness to the fullness of the Gospel in a world that is divided along clear and rigid lines. We are connected by Christ to serve God's purposes in the world. It is not easy, but it is worth it.

Blessings, Jim

- **February birthdays** were sent out in a previous email.
- It's Super Bowl Sunday this week, let's have a kick-off! **M.O.R.E. Justice 2025 Kick-Off** will be after worship THIS SUNDAY, 2/9/25, in the Fellowship classroom. Please join us for refreshments and information!
- This week is also **SCOUT SUNDAY!** Please come support our awesome Troop 91! From Jerry Hilbish, Scoutmaster: "Troop 91 will be participating in the **Scouting for Food drive** during the first two Saturdays in February. The proceeds will benefit Sharing God's Love in Irmo. We will distribute flyers requesting food contributions to homes in Gardendale and other local neighborhoods on Feb. 1 and will be doing the food pick up on Feb. 8th. If you wish to contribute to Scouting for Food please call us at 803-750-0626 to arrange for a food pick up. SOPC will report the scouts' food collection numbers with the monetary donations collected to Soup-er Bowl of Caring.
- Please join us for **Love Revolution** in the Pavilion today from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm and help us serve food to our neighbors in need! Our **Clothing Closet** will open 30 minutes prior.
- Our **Thursday morning 1<sup>st</sup> John Bible study**, led by Pastor Jim, will continue tomorrow morning, 2/6/25, at 10:30 in the Fellowship Classroom.
- **"When the moon hits your eye, like a big [spaghetti dinner], that's amoré!" Make plans to join your SOPC friends and family on Sunday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm for our Valentine's Churchwide Fellowship Supper. All donations above the cost of food will help our youth ministry defray the cost of summer camps and missions. Come travel to Italia with us we celebrate God's LOVE...with PASTA!!**
- Bruce C Hurley will begin leading a 6-lesson **Bible study THIS Thursday, February 13th**, at 5 pm in the Crossroads Classroom. The study is based on Dr. Bruce Metzger's *Revelation: A Symphony in Six Movements* and will meet each Thursday evening. Please contact Bruce or the church office to sign up to attend...or put your name and contact information on the sign-up clipboard in the narthex. If you plan to come to the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, **please read the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Revelation to prepare.** Thanks!
- Consider signing up for our **Small Groups**: "Dinners of 6," "Movie & a Meal," Revelation Bible Study, and/or "Small Town Adventures"! See the table in the narthex for more information or to sign up. If you have signed up previously, you do not need to do so again.
- **Our Fellowship & Roads To Faith Adult Sunday School classes**, (who are currently meeting together,) are currently studying the Gospel of John. All adults of the church --and friends--are welcome to join us!
- **Our Youth** would like to thank you for your support of our SOUP-er Bowl of Caring efforts! Don't forget to bring your canned good or monetary contributions to worship this Sunday, 2/9/25. Sunday evening, the youth will have a Super Bowl party at the Bussells' house, starting at 5 pm. They will also be making Valentine's for some very special church family members at the party!
- **Our next Ladies' Luncheon** will be held at California Dreaming (401 Main St., Columbia) on February 17th at noon. Please notify Margaret Royals if you plan to attend. 803-957-0430; mroyals052@gmail.com. Thanks!
- **SOPC BOOK GROUP** is meeting again! We'd love for you to join us and determine what books we will read! We have some suggestions and could use some more from you. Our first book is *James* by Percival Everett. We will meet at Snow's Ice Cream (next to Steve's Hamburgers) at 1:30 pm on February 27th. Future meetings will be the last Thursday of the month. Contact Kitsie Miller at 803-463-6958 to let her know you're interested, or coming, or if you have any questions.
- **From our Session:**
  1. Our Congregational meeting was held 1-26-25. The 2024 Annual Report was approved and an elder nominating committee for 2025 elected.
  2. Our 2025 Elder Nominating Committee is: Liz Harris, Chair; Jeanne LeBoeuf, Vice-Chair; Cathy Keelen; Frank Sheppard; and Jim Taylor, with Julie Bussells representing SOPW.
  3. Session has approved our 2025 budget, our annual statistical report to the presbytery, and our Interim Pastor Covenant.
  4. APPROVED: Communion to be served on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of every month + Maundy Thursday + Christmas Eve.
  5. APPROVED: Missions Special Offerings in 2025: Souper Bowl of Caring, One Great Hour of Sharing, Mother's Day Offering, Father's Day Offering, Peace & Global Witness, Thornwell Offering, Christmas Joy Offering
  6. SOPC will host a meeting of Trinity Presbytery on Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. VOLUNTEERS are needed.
  7. Session's next meeting will be Monday, February 17<sup>th</sup>.
- If you would like to **volunteer in the sanctuary's sound booth** occasionally, please contact the church office. Training provided!
- **Blessing Box Pantry**: If you are at the store and would like to augment our pantry with pop-tarts or small jars/pouches of peanut butter, those are currently in highest demand and lowest in stock.
- We will hold an **Ash Wednesday** worship service on March 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm.
- There will be a **Maundy Thursday** Communion service on April 17<sup>th</sup>.
- **Thank you to all who continue to bring in used crayons for [www.thecrayoneinitiative.org](http://www.thecrayoneinitiative.org)!** So far, we have collected **100 POUNDS** of used crayons that will be sorted, melted down, and made into new, ergonomic, free

crayons for pediatric hospital patients. Since 2013, The Crayon Initiative has saved over 432,000 pounds of discarded crayons from landfills and has created/distributed 1 MILLION packs of free crayons to children in hospitals.

- **Our Good News Ministry** stands ready and equipped with technological tools to welcome new disciples into the SOPC family. Please join us in praying for God's guidance in ways we can reach out to our neighbors and invite them to share in Christ's love and mission with us!
- On January 18, SOPC hosted a basketball clinic along with the White Knoll Middle School Basketball team. It was a delight to all in attendance!



- Elder Barbara Woods is a leader in The Well Church that meets on our SOPC campus. The following is from her:

Sharon and Annah, Jan. 23, 2025  
Happy New Year! Both of you  
have been so kind and thoughtful and  
considerate to me and The Well Church  
Columbia.  
It has been a wonderful experience  
being at Seven Oaks on many levels,  
and especially with my visits to  
your office.  
I really plan to stop by soon just  
to say hello.  
Hoping that you and your families  
are doing very well. Barbara Woods



**PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN IN TRINITY PRESBYTERY  
ANNUAL GATHERING**

Saturday, April 5, 2025

Fellowship Camp & Conference Center  
457 Camp Fellowship Rd, Waterloo, SC 29384  
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Onsite registration opens @ 9:00 am  
Program starts @10:00 am



Dawn Smith Jordan is our speaker for the 2025 Annual Gathering. Dawn is a Christ-follower, singer/songwriter, musician, speaker, charting recording artist with Urgent Records, and published author. Dawn grew up the daughter of a Baptist deacon daddy and choir singing mama. As a high school student, she felt the call of God on her life to full-time ministry. In 1985 Dawn's younger sister Shari was kidnapped and murdered just two days before her high school graduation, resulting in the largest manhunt in South Carolina's history, drawing national attention. In 1986 Dawn received a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from Columbia College in Columbia, SC. She went on to become Miss South Carolina 1986 and 2nd runner-up to Miss America. As Dawn ministers, she intertwines a combination of music, testimony, humor, transparency, and most importantly, the Truth found in God's Word. She incorporates both music and speaking during her ministry time, including her original songs, worship, as well as the beloved hymns of the faith.

An offering will be taken during the meeting which will be donated partially to our speaker, and partially to Camp Fellowship to help them recover from damage sustained during Hurricane Helene. Offering checks to support these efforts should be made payable to: **PW of Trinity Presbytery.**

**THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL WOMEN OF PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES**

REGISTRATION FOR PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN ANNUAL GATHERING

**DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS MARCH 21, 2025  
\$35 before March 22, 2025; \$40 at door (includes lunch)**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CHURCH NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CLUSTER #: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL REGISTRATION FORM WITH CHECK, PAYABLE TO: **PW of TRINITY PRESBYTERY**

**MAIL TO:** MARY FUHRMAN, TREASURER  
109 CEDAR COURT  
LAURENS, SC 29360



- Special thanks to KJ's grocery store across the street for helping us start 2025 off well in our Blessing Box!



- The following thank-you note is from Thornwell:

01-22-25

Dear friends from Seven Oaks Presbyterian Church,  
you all are such a blessing to Thornwell! Thank you so much  
for your recent gift. Thoughtful donors like yourselves allow us  
to provide essential programs and services to youth and families  
in crisis. We are so lucky to call you all friends in ministry!  
Thanks be to God for your good work!

Blessings,

Rebecca Cox,  
Thornwell