

The Link



The Raeford Presbyterian Church is committed to worshipping God, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, nurturing the faithful, and showing compassion for those in need.

Out of Nothing?

I have been influenced heavily by my Irish genes. I have always loved being outside and have been very comfortable encountering God in both the holy and sacred places and spaces within traditional church, but also in the woods, rivers, oceans and mountains. I love to feel the gentle breeze, listen to bird song as well as the dancing leaves of trees just before an afternoon thunderstorm released her burdened weight. I love the smells of freshly mowed grass and honeysuckle on the vine.

A deeper study of the Celtic ways took me to some writings by John Philip Newell. I will quote some from his book, “Christ of the Celts: The Healing of Creation.” Newell writes,

In the Celtic tradition, Christ comes to remind us of the tune, not a strange tune that comes from afar, but a deeply familiar tune that we have forgotten. It is the tune at the heart of our being and all being. ...it is the Celtic belief that the universe comes out of the womb of the Eternal. (pg. xiii)

The great Celtic teachers over the centuries have said that creation does not come out of nothing. It comes out of God. The belief that matter is made from nothing is like saying that the basic notes or elements of the universe are empty. Christ comes to show us that matter matters! The heartbeat of life is Love. (pg. xiv)

The cross reveals that we approach our true selves as we give ourselves away to one another in love. The whole cosmos is a Self-giving of God. And we will find our place in the great dance only to the extent that we love. (pg. xv)

In the Celtic world, the high-standing crosses that are rooted deep in the ancient landscape express the belief that Christ and creation are inseparably interwoven. (pg. xvi)

J. Philip Newell, “Christ of the Celts: The Healing of Creation” (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 2008).

What a blessing to have two sacraments of baptism services in the past month! Don’t you feel that these little ones are direct gifts from our loving God? What a blessing to peer into the eyes of a newborn child and see the hope and presence of God’s dreams for a better world. All things are possible through the gift of little ones, when given in covenant to walk with the essence of life, love and light — God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And just think, we have joined in covenant with these families to help nourish and nurture these little ones in the knowledge of God! What a challenge and blessing!

As marred as we all are, due to sin and brokenness, at the deepest part of each and all of us, is the image and likeness of God. We would do well to not only believe this, but to teach all others that — at their essence — is the presence, promise and power of God awaiting communion! Each and every one of us is deeply loved by God. You are the chosen! Jesus makes this possible! Even when we feel nothing! Even when we hear nothing! Even when we smell nothing! Even when we see nothing! God will not give up on the crown of creation, you and me and our neighbors. Receive it and be blessed and be filled with the fruit of the Spirit.

Check out John Philip’s book, and perhaps another good one, “Listening to the Heartbeat of God.”

Dr. Fitzgerald

SESSION MEETING

The session will have their Monthly Stated Meeting on Sunday, August 13, at 6:00 pm.

CHRISTMAS CHEER

The Raeford Police Department has launched a GoFundMe page to support their Christmas Cheer Program. They will purchase toys, clothes and other appropriate gifts for children this Christmas. If you would like to participate you can go to [GoFundMe.com/p/15ps](https://www.gofundme.com/p/15ps). Information will be posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.

RAEFORDPRES.ORG

We are happy to announce that the website is launched! Check it out at www.raefordpres.org. This is an evolving communication tool that will change according to our programs and needs. If you have suggestions for improvement, please share them with Dr. Fitzgerald, Lisa Maxwell or any member of the Spiritual Development and Congregational Care Committee. (Bill Booth, Glenda Lester, Ken MacDonald, Delia McNeill, Wanda McPhaul, Steve Phillips, Chuck Slack, Sharon Smith)

ELDER ELECTION

The Officer Nominating Committee is preparing to select the slate of elder nominees for the Class of 2020. Please make any recommendations to one of the committee members: Julian Johnson, Chuck Slack, Steve Phillips, Anne Subaran, Janet Plummer, Betty Smith, and Grace McDonald. Please ask the person you recommend if they would be willing to serve.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER AND BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday Night Dinner and Bible Study have ended for the program year. We will take the month of August off.

FLOWER CALENDAR

The 2017 Flower Calendar is located on the bulletin board outside the office complex. Please sign up if you wish to place flowers in the sanctuary on a particular Sunday.

OFFICE HOURS

The church office is open from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm and from 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. The office will close at noon the first and third Friday of each month. Please be reminded that the office is closed briefly on Monday mornings for the bank deposit to be made.

NEW MEMBERS

On behalf of the session and congregation, we would like to welcome Cortney Hendrix and Helen Haines to our church family. Cortney and Helen joined Raeford Presbyterian Church on July 16 by their profession of faith in our Lord Christ Jesus. Welcome!

MEN OF THE CHURCH

The Men of the Church will have breakfast on Sunday, August 20, at 8:00 am. All men are encouraged to attend.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The PW Fall Gathering will be held in John Ropp Hall on Sunday, August 6, at 4:00 pm. All women are encouraged to attend.

The Presbyterian Women of Coastal Carolina Fall Gathering will be at MacPherson Presbyterian Church on Saturday, August 19.

August Circle Meetings:

Circle #1 – Sunday, August 13, at 4:00 pm in Ropp Hall.

Circle #2 – Not meeting in August.

Circle #3 – Monday, August 7, at 6:00 pm for dinner.

PRAYER MEETING

Elders, deacons, and members of the congregation are invited to meet each Tuesday morning at 7:30 am in the Russell Smith classroom for a time of prayer and reflection. And for those who cannot come on Tuesdays...we will meet on Sunday mornings at 9:15 am in the same classroom.

FOOD PANTRY

The Raeford Methodist Church distributes food each month to those in need. The Session has agreed for us to help with this much needed project. Items needed are: canned items (treet, stew beef, chicken and dumplings, tuna, canned chicken, corn beef, salmon, beans, vegetables and fruits), spaghetti and spaghetti sauce, jelly, rice, grits, oatmeal and diapers. All items need to be in plastic or cans—no glass containers. Items need to be placed in the box outside the church office and delivered to the Methodist Church by the third Monday of each month to be bagged for distribution. The Methodist Church serves approximately 50 families each month.



If you are hospitalized, seriously ill, or having surgery, please notify the church office at 875-2101 or lmaxwell@raefordpres.org. Your church wants to minister to you whenever you are ill. We can do that only if you or your family informs us of your needs. Thank you for your calls and e-mail.

What does it mean to be a church "member"?

To be a church member is to express one's faith in Jesus Christ and the desire to be his disciple, to share his love, and to serve him as a part of the church as the body of Christ.

A most basic question to ask of anyone wishing to become a member of a Presbyterian church is: "Who is your Lord and Savior?" The reply is: "Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior." Question: "Do you promise to be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love?" Answer: "I do."

To become a member of a Presbyterian church is to proclaim publicly one's allegiance to Jesus Christ. It is to vow to live a life of discipleship in which one grows in faith and service to Christ, and, through the church, to the world. The church member assumes responsibility for supporting the church in a variety of ways: through worship, education, mission and ministry, stewardship of resources, financial contributions, and other means. The church is the place where one's Christian life "takes shape."

While "joining" the church occurs through simple affirmations, it takes a lifetime to live out the implications of church membership. Uniquely, the church is the only organization where to become a member one has to admit one is unworthy of membership! To acknowledge Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior is to confess our faith and trust in him-and not ourselves-for eternal salvation. It is to announce that one's life does not belong to oneself, but to our Lord Jesus Christ. This profession is made publicly as a witness to the world and as a visible confession of faith. We do not live out our Christian discipleship alone, but in the community of believers who have also professed their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

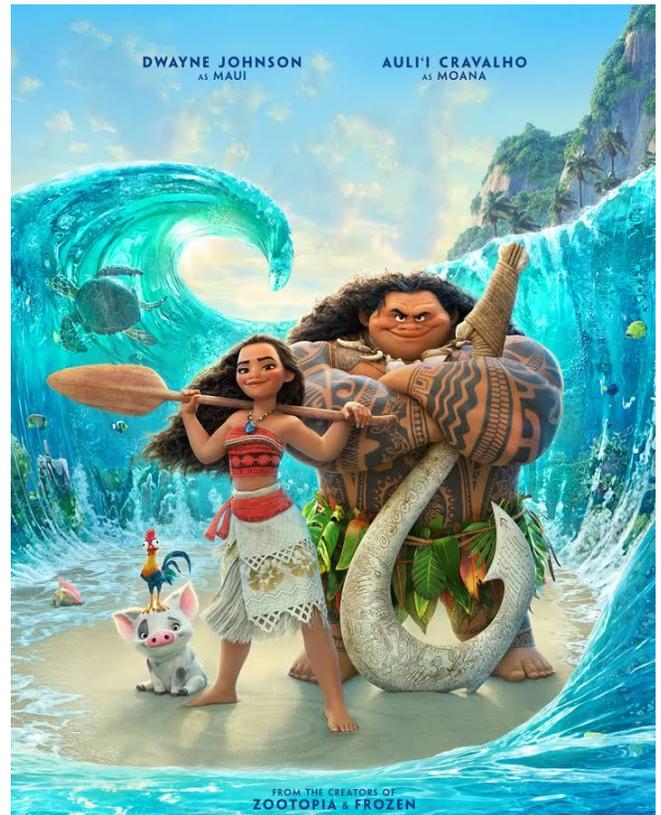
Dinner and a Movie

Join us on Wednesday, August 9th for "Dinner and a Movie."

Come to McKeithan Hall at 6:00 PM for pizza.

Please bring your favorite dessert to share with others.

We will be showing Disney's "Moana."



MYSTERY DINNER

On July 26, five homes hosted our Mystery Dinners. More than 40 people participated in a night of great food, fun and fellowship. The dinners served as a fund raiser for the purchase of tables and chairs for a community center in Miguel Aleman, Mexico. \$1, 840.00 was raised for this mission project. Many of our church members worked to build the center as one of their mission projects. After visiting this spring, it was suggested that we help them furnish the building so it could better serve the community. Thanks to all who agreed to support this work by supporting the dinners.



PRAYER CONCERNS

Lois Austin, Edith Averette, Bobby Britt, Letitia Conoly, Bobby Cox, Charlie Davis, David Dombkowski, Shirley Gibson, Julian Johnson, Susan McColl, Jessica McGougan, Wayne Mills, Kay Norris, Bill Poole, Becky Smith, Ralph Tindall, our missionaries: Dan and Elizabeth Turk; and members of the United States Armed Forces.

Door Duty: Lynn Hendrix, John A. Hendrix, William McDonald, Ralph Tindall

Nursery Duty: John K. and Delia McNeill, Jim and Janet Plummer, Wyatt and Mary Upchurch, Margaret Johnson

August Meetings

Spiritual Dev. & Congregational Care
Tuesday, August 1, 5:00 p.m.

Christian Education
Sunday, August 6, 9:00 a.m.

Music & Worship
Monday, August 7, 5:30 p.m.

Administration & Finance
Tuesday, August 8, 7:00 p.m.

Session Meeting
Sunday, August 13, 6:00 p.m.

PW Council
Sunday, August 27, following worship.

Pledges:

Rec'd. in July	\$33,037.00
Needed Monthly	\$21,868.00
Required to date	\$153,075.00
Received to date	\$137,383.00
Shortage	\$15,692.00



When you can't be with us in person, listen to the live broadcast of the 11:00 am worship service each Sunday on WMFA 1400

MUSIC NOTES

“Transition Time”

Transition is “the process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another”. We are currently in an Interim period with our music program here at RPC and what a great time to reflect, refresh, and renew.

- **Reflect** - As Jeremiah 29:11 says: “for I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. What a wonderful rich history of quality music RPC has been blessed with and shared with the surrounding community of Raeford! I know we all want that vibrant ministry to continue AND through prayer and reflection, I believe it can. Let’s all take time to reflect upon that to see where God will take us next!

- **Refresh** - What do you find most refreshing? A cold drink on a hot day? An afternoon nap? Listening to praise and worship music?

The biblical theme of refreshing has a variety of physical and spiritual meanings. In Scripture we read of refreshment by resting on the Sabbath (Ex. 23:12), with cool water after physical activity (Judg. 15:18-19), by soothing music (1 Sam. 16:23), and with encouraging fellowship (2 Tim. 1:16) (i.e. taken from “The Daily Bread” series). Sometimes, transition can be refreshing in the sense that new things and ideas will be created and tried. What worked yesterday may not work today... getting out of our “comfort zones” is anxious at times, yet it can bring about a sense of excitement for the new. Trusting in God’s help through transitional times certainly can help with refreshment!

- **Renew** - Psalm 51:10, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me” and Lamentations 5:21, “Restore us to You, O LORD, that we may be restored; Renew our days as of old”. These 2 verses remind me that renewal is necessary for a continued relationship and commitment to God as well as the promises that follow when we seek Him and renew our spirits.

Transition can be a great time for Reflection, Refreshment, and Renewal AND a new commitment to our music program. I do look forward to the future, whatever it may be, and pray that we will ALL commit ourselves to continued prayer and God’s will in this time of change and transition.

In Christ’s Love,
Debbie



