

# Faith Speaks

There are so many things that I have wanted to be over the course of my lifetime. It started at eight years old when I wanted to be a ninja turtle, and it progressed from there. I've wanted to be an artist, a police officer, a fisherman, a pilot, an actor, and much, much later in life, a minister.

You'll notice that all of those desires were focused around occupation. I was anxious, not really about what I would BE, but what I would DO. (Save for the ninja turtle thing, but that was a phase) . The preoccupation with what we will do with our life has always been a concern of the young. Today, however, many young people are not stressed out about what they will accomplish or what career they will have. For them, it's the opposite. They're concerned about who they are. They are in a crisis of identity.

There exists today so much confusion around sex and gender, but also around political identity and even racial tribalism. Those facing this identity crisis want to define themselves and even to recreate themselves (Sadly, sometimes

literally with surgery). And the constant stream of internet and social media provides a smorgasbord of temptation - endless examples of what they could be.

So, what exactly is the biblical response to this? Well, there are several, actually. In fact, the issue of identity is prominent throughout the scriptures. Unfortunately, I cannot touch on every point the Bible makes in this short article, which is why I will take one sentence to encourage you to check out my book recommendation on page 3.

Here is an excellent place to start when it comes to addressing the identity crisis with scripture. Remember that at the heart of sin is an inward-looking and preoccupation with ourselves. When Satan tempts Adam and Eve, he entices them by saying that if they eat the fruit, they will be like God, knowing good and evil. Here is Satan making Adam and Eve question their identity. You can almost hear the

serpent whispering, "Don't you want to be more than what God made you?" "With one bite you can recreate yourself."

C.S. Lewis famously defined humility as "not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less." In the Beatitudes, Jesus told us that it is the "poor in spirit" who are blessed. By poor in spirit, he meant those who can honestly evaluate their spirits and realize their own spiritual bankruptcy—their need for a savior.

You see, when someone is obsessed with their identity in any capacity, what they are really obsessed with is not discovering a truth outside of themselves. They are not noble explorers. They are obsessed with themselves. They are attempting to recreate themselves - to be the God of their own (Continued on page 2)



## Church Staff

### Pastor

Rev. John Cleveland

### Church Administrator

Melinda Hawkins

### Music Director

Nancy Lowry

### Financial Secretary

Brooke Echols

### Treasurer

Ronnie Burch

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## 2024

### Session Members

John Cleveland

Gregg Coniglio

Keith Lovern

Andy Martin

Dan Patterson

### Deacons

Jimmy Brock

Randy Cononge

Alan Dennis

Cameron Dennis

Pray that the Lord will bless the preaching and teaching ministry of the church to gather and build up the saints, that God's word will grow and multiply, and that our witness, love, and holiness will increase by the power of the Holy Spirit.

For the following, pray for health, comfort and fellowship with God during a period of sickness, that the Lord will give them faith, patience, joy and submission to his will.

- ◆ **Billie Miller:** fighting cancer
- ◆ **Jay Hilgeford:** needs eye improvement
- ◆ **Jimmy Brock:** cancer treatment
- ◆ **Chris Ober:** continued cancer treatment
- ◆ **Jimmy Cook:** cancer treatment
- ◆ **Myra Echols:** cancer
- ◆ **Miles Pass:** 5y/o with leukemia
- ◆ **Jordan Israel**
- ◆ **Linda Thomas:** lung and liver cancer
- ◆ **Kathy Rewerts:** heart attack and afib
- ◆ **Christine Blansett:** mother in Afib
- ◆ **Carolyn Wolowicz:** vertigo
- ◆ **Kay Horvath:** In Memory Care Center
- ◆ **Peggy Savory:** liver cancer
- ◆ **Wilson Station EPC in Tennessee**
- ◆ **Children in Foster Care**
- ◆ **Our Shut-Ins**
- ◆ **The Lost**
- ◆ **Our Elders and Deacons**
- ◆ **President Biden and Congress**
- ◆ **Supreme Court**
- ◆ **Persons serving in our Military**
- ◆ **Law Enforcement Officers**

**Praise:**  
Jerry Carter was able to leave rehab

**Sympathy:**  
Family of Beverly Echols

**Please pray for our missionaries:**

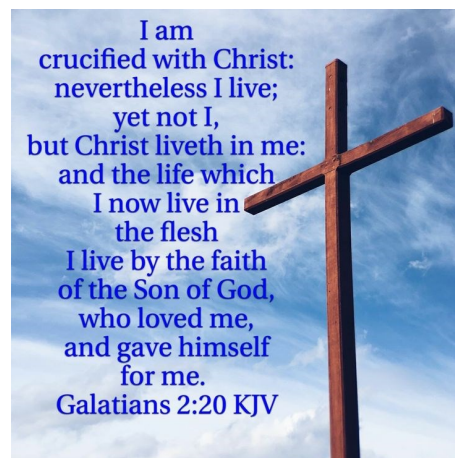
- ◆ Phil and Diane Thrash
- ◆ Gary and Jackie Burnett
- ◆ Santosh John
- ◆ Keith and Rachel Keller
- ◆ Jeff & Veronique Kim
- ◆ Jenny Coon
- ◆ Mike Rasmussen
- ◆ Grady Davidson



Set your affection on things above,  
not on things on the earth.

Colossians 3:2

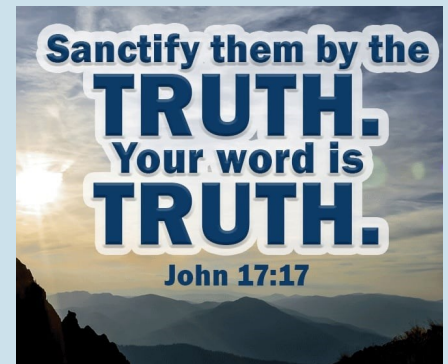
**If you have a prayer request or a praise report that you would like to have included in the next newsletter, please email them to: [faithepcrus@gmail.com](mailto:faithepcrus@gmail.com) by Wednesday, July 31st. This would include any NEW or OLD requests that you would like to have included. This section is renewed monthly.**



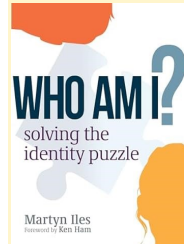
I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.  
Galatians 2:20 KJV

(Continued from page 1) existence and purpose. And this, really, is what Satan wants for mankind. He wants us to stare into the mirror and ponder our identity outside of God. Why does he want that? Because the more we are looking at ourselves, the less we will be obeying the two great commandments - to love God and love our neighbor.

This may be the first step in battling identity crisis. We need to see it for the sin that it is. Does God offer us a solution past that? He does. We can find our identity, our true identity, in Christ. We don't need to be hidden in a sexuality or hidden in another body or a particular affiliation. We must be hidden in Christ! Let me end with Paul's encouragement to the Church in Colossae. "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (Colossians 3:2-4).



## From the Pastor's Shelf...



**"Who Am I?:  
Solving the  
Identity Puzzle"  
Martyn Iles**

You can thank our very own Tuffy Murray for this book recommendation. Tuffy lent me this book a while ago, and I am so glad he did! Martyn Iles is the CEO of Answers in Genesis. He has spent much of his life teaching scripture to young people, and it shows. "Who Am I?" is very straightforward and aims in every way to shed light on this topic for the modern reader. Martyn does a surprisingly thorough job of applying scripture to our current generation's identity crisis on multiple levels. And he does so firmly but graciously, with an evangelistic voice throughout.

If you know of anyone struggling with sexual identity, gender identity, or any skewed view of themselves, I would highly recommend this book. It's a quick read but packed with truth.

### Women's Bible Study

Join us Tuesdays at 10:00 am for our Women's Morning Bible Study in Genesis 12-50 called "God of Covenant" by Jen Wilkins. Jump in anytime! Contact Tracy Cononge if you have any questions.

Join us on Tuesday's at 6:30 pm for our Women's Evening Bible Study as we study an overview of the book of Isaiah. This study is called "Isaiah: The Holy one of Israel" by Sarah Ivill. Contact Becky Fowler or Pam Fraticelli if you have any questions.

### Men's Bible Study

Our Men's Bible Study meets on Thursday's at 7:00 pm. We are studying the book of James. This is a wonderful opportunity to gather with other men around God's Word, fellowship, and prayer. Contact Gregg Coniglio for more information.

### Pastor's Bible Study

Our next 4-week Bible study will begin on Wednesday, July 31st. We will have dinner beginning at 6:00 pm and a study of evangelism at 6:45 pm. Please email, call or sign-up in the Narthex to make your dinner reservations!

**Make plans to attend this great study!**

## Fellowship News



### Girlfriends of Faith

The Girlfriends of Faith are excited to announce a **BABY SHOWER** for Baby Cleveland and his beautiful parents, John and Sara. As members, and /or regular attendees, you are invited to join this happy event.

**WHEN:**  
Sunday, August 4, 2024

**TIME:**  
9:00-10:30 am.  
(during Sunday School and Fellowship time)

**GIFT REGISTRY:**  
(click the link)  
**Amazon: Baby Registry**  
\*Gift cards or other "non-Amazon" gifts are also welcome

"Rejoice with those who rejoice..."  
Romans 12:15



## BOOK NOOK

Check out the bookshelf in the Narthex. We have excellent books available for your Christian growth.

The June regular Session meeting was held on Thursday, June 6th, at the church at 5:30 PM.

For the devotion, the Session discussed Dispensationalism vs Covenant Theology.

Plans were made for Homecoming Sunday, July 14th. The church will have a fish fry and side dishes will be requested from the congregation.

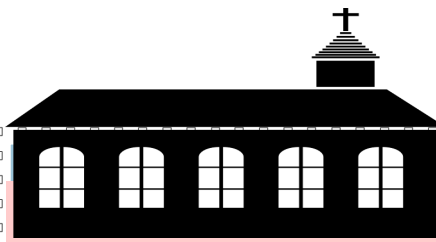
The Session discussed potential future sermon topics once the Ephesians series is completed.

The Session discussed the Lord's Supper, participation by children, and infant baptism.

Prayer needs were discussed and lifted to God.

The next Session meeting will be on July 11th at 5:30 PM at the church.

**Faith Presbyterian EPC Session**  
John Cleveland, Moderator  
Dan Patterson, Clerk  
Gregg Coniglio  
Keith Lovern  
Andy Martin



## Calendar

- ◆ July 2 Ladies am/pm Study
- ◆ July 7 The Lord's Day
- ◆ July 9 Ladies am/pm Study
- ◆ July 11 Men's Bible Study
- ◆ July 13 Youth Hangout
- ◆ July 14 The Lord's Day
- ◆ July 14 HOMECOMING
- ◆ July 16 Ladies am/pm Study
- ◆ July 18 Men's Bible Study
- ◆ July 21 The Lord's Day
- ◆ July 23 Ladies am/pm Study
- ◆ July 25 Men's Bible Study
- ◆ July 27 Youth Hangout
- ◆ July 28 The Lord's Day
- ◆ July 30 Ladies am Study
- ◆ July 31 Pastor Bible Study



## June 2024 Financial News

### Donations

**\$36,678.21**

### Expenses

**\$29,892.67**

### P.O.P. Fund

**\$6,842.22**

### Mortgage Principal

**\$746,766.34**



**July 14th**  
Invite your  
Family and Friends  
for an  
old-fashioned  
fish fry  
and activities

Immediately  
following  
our  
Worship Service!



Are you a  
4th to 12th  
grader?

You don't want to  
miss out on the fun  
and  
excitement of our  
hangouts!

Our next hangout's  
are on  
July 13th and 27th  
at 6:00 pm  
At the Church  
Bring a friend!

## Outreach News

### NEED HELP?

If you have a need that arises, or know of anyone that is in need, please reach out to our Deacons for assistance. They have the ability to reach out to the congregation on your behalf as well as physically meet your needs, or they can point you in the right direction for help.

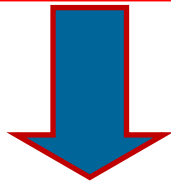
#### Deacons of Faith

Jimmy Brock  
Randy Cononge  
Alan Dennis  
Cameron Dennis



### Volunteers Needed For Fellowship Time!

If you would like to provide refreshments, there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board by the kitchen. Speak to a Deacon if you have any questions!



### Mission of the Month

### Creekside Christian Academy

www.creeksidechristian.academy

### Needs

#### Amazon Gift Cards

#### Or choose items from the following link

These will be used to purchase items for their math/STEM program.

You can view the wish list at

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2YTW6U9LS42P2?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2YTW6U9LS42P2?ref_=wl_share)

**Please place your items in the mission box in the back of the sanctuary or give to Heather Skelton.**

**Thank you for always giving so generously to those in need!**

*Your true identity is who God says you are. You will never discover who you are by looking inside yourself or listening to what others say. The Lord gets the first word because He made you. He gets the daily word because you live before His face. He gets the last word because He will administer your final “comprehensive life review.”*

#### David Powlison

Reference  
ESV Men’s Devotional Bible, Crossway, 2015.

## UPDATE FROM JENNY COON

**Marhaba!**

A warm welcome to those of you who are new to this newsletter that I have met over this past month back in the States! My heart is full as I prepare to return to Lebanon in less than a week. I have felt so loved, supported, and encouraged in these weeks that I have been back that the only word I keep repeating in my head is grateful.

One of the neat things that happened while I was back was re-connecting with a dear Syrian refugee family that I did ministry with for several years in Beirut that got re-settled to Salt Lake City six months ago. They are Muslim-background believers and were eager to get started in a church in America, however with the language/cultural barriers they were finding it difficult. I prayed God would lead us to the right community and found a small community church nearby. I helped a little with introductions and translations and then a few church members took it from there and they have gone every Sunday since then!

Balassan clinic has continued on in my absence and most notably hosted a social support group sponsored by the

Red Cross for moms with children under the age of 5 that has been a huge encouragement for these moms.

I'll send a more detailed update after I get back, but I wanted to welcome our newcomers and thank you all for a refreshing trip back to the States. I honestly was struggling a little with the good-byes and the thought of leaving, when I talked with my Syrian friend in Salt Lake City yesterday who reminded me "Yes, I know it is hard to leave your family, but you need to go and be a light to all those who are tired in Lebanon and God will strengthen you."

Thank you to each and every one of you and how you pray, support, and encourage the ministry here in Lebanon as well as me personally. I could not do it without you!

With gratitude,  
Jenny



"Susie" is a patient of mine who is a widow and has become a dear friend. She lives alone and struggled considerably with failing eyesight. We were able to help her with the funds for surgery this week and she wanted me to thank everyone for their prayers and generosity.



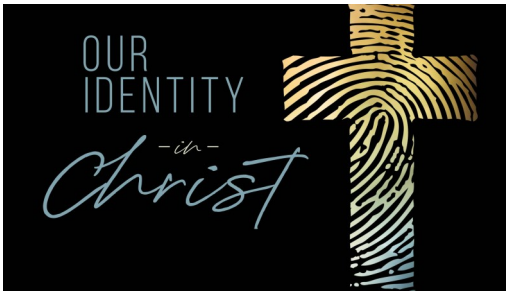
Reunited in Salt Lake



To the glory of God, Faith Presbyterian Church has been called together to faithfully proclaim the Gospel, to make and equip disciples for Christ, and to advance God's Kingdom in our families, community, and world.



Faith Presbyterian Church is a congregation of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church ([www.epc.org](http://www.epc.org)) and the Presbytery of the Southeast ([www.epcsoutheast.org](http://www.epcsoutheast.org)).



*For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.  
2 Corinthians 5:14-17*



Kevin Anderson	7/06
Matthew Echols	7/06
Dan Patterson	7/08
Lauren Hawkins	7/14
David Donehoo	7/16
Nicholas Echols	7/16
Jere Echols	7/16
Donna McCormick	7/19
Richard Echols	7/21
Peggy Thomas	7/21
Mike West	7/23
Elizabeth Morris	7/24
Paul Peters	7/25
Jeff Thomas	7/29
Kate Rocker	7/31

**Our Church Website:**  
[www.FaithMcDonough.com](http://www.FaithMcDonough.com)

**Church Email:**  
[faithepcrus@gmail.com](mailto:faithepcrus@gmail.com)

**Church Phone Number:**  
770-648-5288

**Mailing Address:**  
Faith Presbyterian Church EPC  
1185 East Lake Road  
McDonough, GA 30252

**CHOIR NEWS**

If you would like to join our choir, contact Nancy Lowry! We would love for you to join us!



**CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

If you are interested in joining Faith Presbyterian Church (EPC), you may do so by a profession of your faith in Jesus Christ, by a re-affirmation of your faith, or by a transfer of your membership from another church. Please speak with the an Elder if you have any questions about joining.

# July 2024

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

	1	2 10:00 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 Ladies Bible Study	3	4	5	6
7 <b>Communion</b> 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship New Member Class	8	9 10:00 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 Ladies Bible Study	10	11 7:00 pm Men's Bible Study	12	13 6:00 pm Youth Hangout
14 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship <b>HOMECOMING!</b>	15	16 10:00 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 Ladies Bible Study	17	18 7:00 pm Men's Bible Study	19	20
21 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship	22	23 10:00 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 Ladies Bible Study	24	25 7:00 pm Men's Bible Study	26	27 6:00 pm Youth Hangout
28 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship	29	30 10:00 Ladies Bible Study	31 6:00 pm Dinner and Pastors Bible Study			