



From the Pastor

Our Pastor Nominating Committee has been faithfully at work—reading applications, interviewing candidates, praying and discerning. It’s a serious and holy task. But let’s be honest: sometimes in our hopes, we imagine “the perfect minister.” You know the type: just the right balance of charisma, vision, pastoral care, preaching brilliance, and organizational skill. The kind of person who never misses a visit, always has a fresh sermon illustration, remembers every birthday, and still finds time to fix the toilet when it is blocked.

The truth? It’s a lovely dream. That minister doesn’t exist. And maybe that’s good news.

To make the point, imagine for a moment two résumés that might have landed in the Committee’s inbox. What if some of the greats of our faith actually applied for our vacant position?

Application: Apostle Paul

- **Strengths:** Tireless missionary zeal; deep theological insight; prolific letter writer; willing to suffer for the Gospel.
- **Weaknesses (according to the committee):** Comes across as “too intense”; history of conflict with church members; sermons sometimes run long and are “hard to understand”; tends to stir up trouble wherever he goes.
- **Verdict:** *Thank you for your application. While we admire your passion, we feel you might not be the best fit for our congregation at this time. We wish you well in your future ministry endeavors.*

Application: Jesus of Nazareth

- **Strengths:** Compelling teacher; compassionate healer; speaks with unique authority; excellent with children; skilled at multiplying loaves and fishes for potlucks.
- **Weaknesses (according to the committee):** Lack of formal ordination; limited pastoral experience outside of carpentry; tendency to make people uncomfortable; has been known to challenge religious traditions; prefers hanging out with tax collectors, outsiders, and people who “don’t really fit in.”
- **Verdict:** *We are grateful for your application. However, after careful consideration, we feel your leadership style may be “too radical” for our needs. We will keep your résumé on file.*

Of course, this is all a little tongue-in-cheek. The point is not to poke fun at the process—our PNC has an important and prayerful task, and they are working diligently on behalf of us all. But the reminder is simple and serious: there is no such thing as a “perfect pastor.” Even Paul and Jesus themselves would likely not have made it through our modern committee process.

The truth is, the church doesn’t run on perfect pastors. It runs on the grace of Christ, who calls imperfect people to serve his perfect Gospel to imperfect people. The Spirit gives us pastors not as flawless heroes, but as fellow travelers—people with gifts and weaknesses, hopes and limitations—through whom God still chooses to work.

Manchester Concert Series Welcomes One Voice Chorus Chorale

On Saturday, September 6th the Manchester Concert Series will welcome One Voice Chorus Chorale. One Voice Chorus is Central Virginia's largest community chorus. Formed in 2001 and incorporated as a non-profit organization in 2004, One Voice brings together people of different backgrounds to "sing the beauty and power of diversity." The OVC Chorale is a smaller group of singers selected from the 125+ member full chorus that performs at community events throughout Central Virginia. The chorus and chorale are under the direction of John W. McLean, Jr.

The concert will be held at 4:00 PM in the Southminster Sanctuary. Doors will open at 3:30 PM. Admission is \$10.00 per person, plus a non-perishable food item for the Southminster Food Closet. This event is open to the public. Please invite your family and friends.

Worship & Education

Rally Day 2025

Join us on Sunday, September 21st as we kick off another Sunday School year with Rally Day. Our day will begin at 10:00 AM with a light breakfast in the Fellowship Hall. At 11:00 AM we will gather in the Sanctuary for a special family service. Our Bible Fun Week kids will be on hand to show us what they learned over the summer.

Choir Rehearsals: Update

The Southminster Sanctuary and Handbell Choirs will resume rehearsals in September. The choir will kick off the year with an off-site get together on Tuesday, September 2nd, with formal rehearsals resuming on September 9th. The Handbell Choir will rehearse on Tuesdays from 6:00 PM – 6:45 PM; the Sanctuary Choir will rehearse from 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Both choirs are always welcoming new members of any experience or skill level. If you have questions or are interested in joining our music program, please reach out to Bethany Wolfe at southminsterpresmusic@gmail.com.

Children's Sunday School 2025 - 2026

Beginning September 28, 2025 our Children's Sunday School Program "The Gathering" will resume. Children begin this program in the sanctuary at 11:00 AM and participate in the Worship Service with their families. They are then excused to attend a children's education program prior to the beginning of the sermon. The children remain in the Sunday School room designated as The Gathering and can be picked up at the end of the worship service.

At certain points throughout the year, Gail DeCosta will offer a Toddler Class for our youngest children in the nursery. Watch your bulletins and upcoming newsletter for start date. Parents are encouraged to participate as needed to make your child's experience positive. Bethany Wolf, our Choir Director will lead a Children's Choir the second Sunday of every month during The Gathering time. During these sessions, we will be focusing on learning the Doxology, simple Christian songs and hymns. If you have any questions or are available to help us during The Children's Program, please contact Laura Pearson or Gail DeCosta.

Facility Highlight: Kitchen Cleaning

Thanks and kudos to Rich Kowalski, who spent several days last month purging, deep cleaning, and organizing the church kitchen and pantry.

Southminster is grateful to have a large kitchen available for the congregation to use. It is the hub for our memorial receptions, Liberation Veteran Services dinners, church receptions, and various other events. Any church member is welcome to make use of the space and to share in the responsibility of keeping it neat and clean. If you need paper products (plates, cups, napkins, plastic flatware) we currently have a large supply in the pantry. We invite you to make use of this supply before buying more.

Pulpit Supply In The Coming Months

As part of Rev. O'Connell's new interim covenant, he will be out of the pulpit one Sunday each month. The Session has already arranged for coverage for these Sundays. Our schedule for the remainder of 2025 will be as follows:

Sunday, September 14: Rev. Katherine Jackson

Sunday, October 5: Rev. Arch Williams

Sunday, November 9: Rev. Katherine Jackson

Rev. O'Connell will not be taking any Sundays off in December due to the holidays

Witness & Outreach

School Supply Drive Report

On Sunday, August 10th, we culminated our School Supply Drive with the Blessing of the Backpacks. Thank you to everyone who stayed after worship to pack up the school supplies for the case managers at Chesterfield Mental Health. And thank you to Gail DeCosta for her leadership of this mission project.

This year, we outfitted 70 students of all ages with the tools they need to learn this school year. Thank you to everyone who generously contributed supplies and funds, and well as those who pitched in and helped with the counting and organizing. We couldn't do it without you.



SAVE THE DATE: Rise Against Hunger Event

Please mark your calendar now for our Rise Against Hunger meal packing event on Sunday October 19, 2025. Because of available funds and our history of hard and efficient work, we are accepting another challenge to pack a few more bags this year. We need 80+ volunteers to make this happen. Sign ups will begin in mid-September. Watch for more details in the announcements and the October newsletter.

So let us pray for our Pastor Nominating Committee with patience and encouragement. They are not looking for the “perfect minister” (that job is already taken by Christ). They are seeking the right minister for this congregation, at this time, to walk with us in faith and mission. And that’s more than enough.

Rev. Jock O’Connell

Nothing more than a fellow traveler with you on the road with God.

Pastoral Care: Sharing the Care of Christ

One of the most beautiful pictures the Gospels give us is of Jesus as the shepherd who tends his flock, the healer who sees the brokenhearted, the teacher who notices the one who struggles at the edges. Jesus is the caregiver par excellence. His care was never hurried or half-hearted. He drew near to people in their loneliness, their suffering, their shame—and gave them dignity, hope, and healing.

This is the model and heartbeat of pastoral care in the church. At its core, pastoral care is the ministry of being present to one another in the name of Christ—whether through listening, praying, encouraging, visiting, or simply showing up in times of need. It is not only about solving problems, but about reminding one another that we belong to God, and that we do not walk alone.

In our congregation, this care is shared in many ways: through the pastor’s visits and prayers, through the quiet compassion shown by members to one another, and in a special way through our Care Group and Pastor’s Aides. They quietly and faithfully carries Christ’s compassion into our homes, hospitals, and lives. They make phone calls, send notes, prepare meals, and pray with people who need to be reminded of God’s nearness. Their ministry is a gift, and we give thanks to God for their steady, tender service.

When we care in Christ’s name, something remarkable happens: not only are the hurting strengthened, but the whole congregation is built up. Acts of care weave us together as a faith community, making us more sensitive to one another’s needs, more patient with one another’s struggles, and more joyful in one another’s blessings. In this way, pastoral care is never a one-way street; it is a shared journey that deepens our bonds as brothers and sisters in Christ.

And for those who receive care—whether through a prayer in the hospital, a card in the mailbox, or a visit at the kitchen table—it is often experienced as a reminder that Christ himself has not forgotten them. They hear in the voices of caregivers the voice of the Shepherd, who knows his sheep by name and carries them close to his heart.

Session Highlights

- Approved July 2025 Financial Report
- Elected Jerry Davis as Commissioner to October 18 POJ Meeting
- Approved Sunday, October 5 for the Peace and Global Witness Offering
- Approved Sunday, October 19 for Rise Against Hunger Event
- Rescheduled Session Meeting from October 19 to October 26 due to Rise Against Hunger Event
- Approved Sunday, December 7 for the Mitten Tree project

Pastoral care, then, is not just another “program” of the church. It is one of the ways we embody the Gospel among us, showing that the love of Christ is not only preached on Sunday but lived and shared throughout the week. It is a ministry that belongs to all of us, because in Christ, we are all both givers and receivers of care.

So let us give thanks for Jesus, our caregiver and shepherd. Let us give thanks for our Care Group and Pastor’s Aides, who so faithfully share his compassion. And let us give thanks that, in caring for one another, we are drawn closer—not only to each other—but to Christ himself.

Rev. Jock O’Connell

Directory Updates

Jerry & Aileen Davis

6000 Avery Point Way

Apt. 317

Richmond, VA 23233

804-917-3602

Jdav2025@outlook.com

Sandy Stegall

7828 Cold Harbor Road

Apt. 102

Mechanicsville, Va 23111

We Pray For:

Ramona Clopton, Jane Conrad, Jean Derrenbacker, Bob Hall, Patsy Hevener, Winki Lampe, Jim & Jane Lewis, Shirley Martin, Donna Medicus, Nancy Peters, Lynda & Charles Reed, Betty Smith, Billy Smith, Susan Teller, Art & Ginny Williams, Lora Anderson

For the full list of Joys & Concerns, please see the pastor’s weekly email.

Contact pastor@southpreschurch.org if you or a loved one would like to be added to the list.

Southminster Notes

My family and I would like to thank everyone for their thoughts, prayers, and cards. I would especially like to thank Karen Stafford for always being willing to drive me whenever I needed. Also, for Riki Stone and helpers for hosting our lovely reception. Everything was wonderful!

Blessings,

Patsy Hevener and family

Thank you to the funeral committee for everything they have done for our memorial service and reception. I am so grateful. Riki Stone has been so helpful and she has a great group helping her. I have been to the luncheon in June and was so impressed.

Thank you so much,

Judy Updegrove and Sons

Dear SPC Family,

I would like to express my gratitude for your generosity in regards to the scholarship money that I was given for school. I do not take for granted that you have chosen to believe in me by giving me the opportunity to further my education. I am extremely grateful to be a part of this wonderful community. Thanks again.

Love,

Cooper Knight

September Birthdays

- 3 Ryan Endries, Betty Smith
- 6 Lynda Reed
- 11 Gene Rhodes
- 12 Tom Murray, Tristian Toro
- 13 Candace Young
- 14 Matt Davis, Charlie Roland
- 18 Gail DeCosta
- 22 Eurisha Smith
- 23 Judy Lee
- 25 Rich Kowalski
- 28 Phillipa Solaimani
- 30 Mary Ann Hepp, David Knight

September Anniversaries

- 5 Mark & Pattie Pinchbeck (27)
- 6 David & Kerry Knight (22)
- 10 Robin & Joyce Lapsley (42)
- 11 Jerry & Aileen Davis (54)
- 13 David & Mary Stahl (39)
- 15 Rich & Bonnie Kowalski (58)
- 17 Kathy Liesfeld & Ken Irby (7)
- 20 Matt & Ginny Ball (17)
- 20 Jerry & Cheriene McCall (50)
- 23 Rick & Ann Schaffer (36)

Have we missed your birthday or anniversary?

Let the church office know: 804-276-1749.

Presbyterian Women

Ruth Circle

September 2nd at 2:00 PM
Conference Room

Anna Circle

September 21st
Lake Anna ~ Carpool after church
Potluck Lunch

Martha Circle

September 10th at 10:00 AM
Conference Room

September Schedules

*If you cannot be present on your scheduled day,
please notify your schedule's organizer.*

Communion

7 Team 4

Elder Servers: Laura Pearson, Judy Lee,
Rick Abbott

Church Closer for September

Judy Lee

Ushers

7 Jerry & Cheriene McCall

14 Jerry & Cheriene McCall,

Kathy Liesfeld, Freya Harper

21 The Swenck Family

28 Clay Spillman, David Huff,

Matt Briggs, Kitty Bice

Food Closet

2 Mary Stahl, David Stahl

4 Gene Rhodes, Karen Stafford

9 Ann Potts, Bonnie Kowalski

11 Freya Harper, Gene Rhodes

16 Shelley Murray, Deborah Cain

18 Cheriene McCall, Pat Erwin

23 Frank Grier, Jane Williams

25 Mary Stahl, Carol Todd

30 Gene Rhodes, Karen Stafford

Children's Sunday School

7 No Children's Sunday School

14 No Children's Sunday School

21 Rally Day – Children in Worship

28 Lesson 1: Adam & Eve

Southminster Presbyterian Church

September 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Labor Day Office Closed 6 PM: BSA Scouts	2 Food Closet 2 PM: Ruth Circle 7 PM: Girl Scouts		4 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers	5 7:30 PM: IPCN	6 4 PM: Manchester Concert 7:30 PM: IPCN
7 Communion 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship	8 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts	9 Food Closet 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts	10 10 AM: Martha Circle	11 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers	12 7:30 PM: IPCN	13 7:30 PM: IPCN
14 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 10:15 AM: Pastor's Aids 11 AM: Worship	15 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts	16 Food Closet 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts	17	18 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers	19 7:30 PM: IPCN	20 7:30 PM: IPCN
21 Rally Day 10 AM: Breakfast 11 AM: Worship 12 PM: Anna Circle Carpool 1 PM: Session 3 PM: IPCN	22 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts	23 Food Closet 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts	24	25 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers	26 7:30 PM: IPCN	27 7:30 PM: IPCN
28 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Children's Sun Sch 11 AM: Worship	29 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts	30 Food Closet 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts				
3 PM: IPCN	7:30 PM: IPCN	7:30 PM: IPCN				
Notes						
Sunday, September 14: Rev. Katherine Jackson will preach						

SOUTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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www.southpreschurch.org

office@southpreschurch.org

Return Service Requested

September 2025



Rally Day

Sunday, September 21st

10:00 AM Breakfast

11:00 AM Family Worship

Would you like to receive your newsletter electronically?

Send an email to office@southpreschurch.org with *Add Me To Newsletter List* in the subject line.