

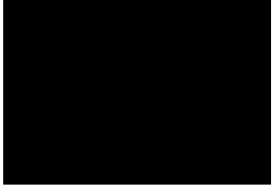
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Newberry

1701 Main Street, Newberry, SC 29108

August 2020

Shut In of the Month

Richard & Glenda Lominick



Prayer List

David Bunn (milt.); Betty Bland, Mark McGuffee, Pat Harmon, Tony Fulmer, Lee Ringer, Vernetha Renwick, Eliza Parr, Glenda & Richard Lominick, Jean Williamson.

Ministry Schedule

Sunday
9:45 am

Sunday School

10:55 am
Worship

Wednesday

6:30 pm
Bible Study/
Prayer

Update from the Session

Below is a summary of the actions taken by the Session at the July stated meeting:

1. The June Financial Report was received as information.
2. The June Session minutes were approved.
3. The shepherding concerns of the congregation were shared and discussed.
4. A limited choir (8 members max) will begin practice on Aug. 5 in the sanctuary.
5. There will be a covered dish dinner on August 12.
6. There will be a Fellowship Meal on August 23 following the service.
7. Drew Goodman, World Witness missionary, will be the guest preacher on August 23 and share about the ministry of church planting in Wales.
8. The August stated meeting is scheduled for the 26th.

If you have any questions, please speak with an elder.



PRAYER CHAIN

If you have an urgent prayer request, please email or call **Marc Faulkenberry**, and he will distribute it via email. If you would like to be **added** to the distribution list, please email Marc. It is a privilege to lift up others in prayer to our great God.

✉ [Redacted]@mail.com
☎ 3 [Redacted]

SERVICE LIVESTREAM

The Sunday morning worship service is being livestreamed, 10:52 AM, on the church's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/newberryarp. There a document, **Worship Guide**, that includes all the material needed to participate at home on our webpage, www.newberryarp.org.

Sunday School Has Resumed

SS Classes are now meeting at **9:45 AM**:

- **Youth:** Youth Room
- **Friendship:** Usual Room
- **Berean:** Fellowship Hall

FINANCIAL DATA as of July 26, 2020

Budget Receipts \$ 93,640.57
Budget Needs \$ 99,269.10

We appreciate everyone mailing their tithes and offerings to the church. We give thanks to the Lord for His faithfulness expressed through your continual giving and support!!!

The Session's Authority and Responsibility Concerning Public Corporate Worship

Over the next several months, I would like to explain in detail the biblical basis by which the Session determined to maintain public corporate worship at Newberry ARP Church. While the majority of churches, including most ARPs, suspended their corporate worship services for several months (and some have still not resumed), your Session prayerfully and thoughtfully considered our governing documents (the ARP Standards) and the Scriptures to determine how we would lead and shepherd this congregation. It is my prayer, as we still journey through this coronavirus pandemic that you all will gain a greater sense of trust and confidence in how the Lord has sustained and guided our congregation.

The question that the Session had to resolve was: What is the scope of a Session's authority regarding a congregation's public corporate worship? The answer to this question primarily relates to the statement found in our Form of Government (FOG) concerning the Authorities and Responsibilities of the Session:

6.8 In order to carry out its responsibility, working under the proper jurisdiction of the higher courts, the Session shall: L. Exercise, in accordance with the Directory of Public Worship, authority over the time and place of the preaching and teaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, and over all other religious services

Based on the Directory of Public Worship (DPW) "the preaching and teaching of the Word and the administration of the sacrament, and...all other religious services" clearly include the weekly Lord's Day corporate worship service. Therefore a Session has the authority in accordance with the DPW¹ to determine the **time** and **place** of a congregation's public corporate worship.²

The Responsibilities of a Session and the Congregation

A subtle but formal distinction that we need to recognize in resolving this question is the difference between the responsibility of the Session in **calling** its members for corporate worship and the response of the members in **gathering** for worship.³ Though the visible outcome may be the same for both parties, the question of authority is not. The Session in this instance calls and the members gather. Admittedly the elders have the same, if not more due to their office,⁴ obligation to gather for worship as the members but in this instance the Session is acting as a governing court of the congregation. By their action, the Session is exercising its authority to guard and promote the spiritual welfare of the congregation.⁵

In shepherding the flock of God, the Session is regulated primarily by Scripture and the Standards. The Session should as caring and wise under-shepherds take into consideration the members' response in guiding their

¹ DPW 2.5 The service of worship shall be under the authority of the minister and the session.

² Throughout this article, public corporate worship (FOG 3.2) or public worship or corporate worship is defined in accordance with the DPW as "a holy convocation in which the Triune God meets with and ministers to His assembled covenant people through Word and sacrament, and His people respond with praise, thanksgiving, repentance, confession of sin, supplication, and confession of faith." (3.6) It is to be understood in the narrow sense of particular occasions of worship that is public, formal, and planned. (DPW 3.3 and 3.4)

³ FOG 4.4 (RESPONSIBILITY OF CHURCH MEMBERS) Church members are **required** to: A. Make diligent use of the means of grace. B. Share faithfully in the **worship** and service of the Church. F. Submit to the authority of the elders.

⁴ The minister is a member of the Session (serves as its moderator) as well as a member of a Presbytery. But he is under similar obligations according to his ordination vows.

⁵ FOG 6.4, also 6.5 and 6.6.

governance, but it should not be the only or even the primary factor. They must patiently and graciously uphold the truths of Scripture calling God's people to faithfulness and progressive spiritual maturity. Providential circumstances and individual consciences may prevent all members from responding uniformly, but that should not deter the Session in upholding biblical directives. The lack of ability or commitment of some members to fulfill or submit to the Session must not compromise the authority of Scripture.⁶ The Session must lead the congregation in its unswerving commitment to the precepts and principles of Scripture while doing all it can to encourage the congregation to joyful and heartfelt obedience to the Lord. Neither the degree nor the proportion of the congregation's compliance should persuade the Session in disregarding the commandments of Holy Scripture.

In seeking to determine the scope of a Session's authority in this sphere, several related topics need to be addressed and clarified. Even within section L, there are qualifications, "in accordance with the Directory of Public Worship" and "the time and place," that set certain limits to the Session's authority. Moreover, other portions of the ARP Standards provide vital insights that necessarily regulate this authority.

The Essential Nature of Corporate Worship for a Congregation

The locus of this discussion begins within the context of the local congregation. A congregation, a local visible expression of the ARP Church, is defined by the FOG as "a company of Christians, with their children, associated together according to the Scriptures for worship and ministry in the name of Christ."⁷ According to this definition, the two necessary and visible⁸ attributes of a congregation are **worship** and ministry. Therefore, worship⁹ is **essential** in defining what a congregation is; so much that a congregation that ceases to worship corporately is on the verge of desisting as a congregation. This fact is confirmed by the FOG 3.21 when it states, "When a congregation becomes so reduced in its membership and strength as to be unable to **maintain the ordinances of regular public worship**...in the judgment of Presbytery, best served by dissolving the congregation, Presbytery shall formally **declare it dissolved**." One of the stated reasons for a Presbytery to dissolve a congregation is its inability to maintain regular public worship. Public worship is so essential to the essence of a congregation that its existence is contingent on its regular¹⁰ gatherings.

The FOG continues to express the purpose of a congregation as being "to glorify God by conducting public corporate worship, bringing the lost to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, building them up in the Christian faith, and preparing them for Christian service."¹¹ In summary, the chief end of a congregation is consistent with the chief end of man (WSC Q.1), namely, to glorify God (and to enjoy Him forever). One of the four means (listed with the preposition "by"), and the first, by which a congregation fulfills this purpose is "by conducting public corporate worship." This first means, along with the other three means, is how a

⁶ For example, if several households in a congregation (as much as half or more) will not be present for corporate worship on a particular Sunday for various reasons (vacation, illness, work, travel, etc.), the Session should not and cannot suspend corporate worship that Sunday.

⁷ FOG 3.1.

⁸ The conjunction "and" requires that both attributes be present. It implies inclusiveness. By saying "A and B" (or "A, B, C, ..., and T"), it means **both** A and B are **required**. This understanding of "and" will be critical in clarifying the responsibility of the Session.

⁹ Worship with respect to a congregation is specified as "public corporate worship" FOG 3.2.

¹⁰ The meaning of "regular" should be governed by the Standards. Based on the Fourth Commandment, the Sabbath is to be observed on a weekly basis.

¹¹ 3.2.

congregation seeks to glorify God.¹² A congregation is not limited to these means alone (as long as they conform to the Bible and our Standards), but they are the primary and **necessary** means in fulfilling its purpose.

In considering the various means, or ministries as they may be called, of a congregation, what becomes evident is that the other three means can be fulfilled by conducting public corporate worship. In other words, if a congregation is only able to conduct public corporate worship but not the others three means separately, it is still possible to fulfill its purpose. On the other hand, even if the other three means are being conducted in some other form or ministry, but public corporate worship is not, then it can be argued based on the inclusive nature of the conjunction “and”¹³ that a congregation is not fulfilling its purpose. In fact, there are many para-church ministries that seek to glorify God by performing one or all three of these other means in “bringing the lost to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, building them up in the Christian faith, and preparing them for Christian service.” But in fulfilling these ministries they are not rivaling or replacing the church/congregations by conducting public corporate worship services. Public corporate worship is essential to the being and doing of a congregation. It is what defines and directs a congregation as a distinct visible corporate body within a community.

This was the first step in determining what the Session could and should do. We had to be true and consistent with our governing documents as to what was permissible and what was necessary. As we considered the Scriptures and our Standards, it became clear to us that suspending public corporate worship indefinitely without any reliable forecast during a pandemic was beyond the Session’s authority. We concluded that public corporate worship was such an essential aspect of our congregation’s public existence that we could not cease from calling the congregation to worship regardless of how many members gathered. Under the authority of God, His Word, the ARP Standards, and the knowledge we had about the coronavirus, we believed that we were being faithful to the Lord by maintaining corporate worship. In the coming months, we will see more specifically how the nature of corporate worship and gathering on the Lord’s Day buttressed our decision all the more.

Pastor Seth

¹² The means by which a congregation glorifies God are listed (“by conducting..., bringing..., building..., and preparing...”) and joined by the conjunction “and” which implies that all these means are to be **included**.

¹³ See footnote #2.

*The ARP Standards (Form of Government, Directory of Public Worship, Book of Discipline, Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger Catechism, Shorter Catechism) can be downloaded at <http://arpchurch.org/governing-documents/>



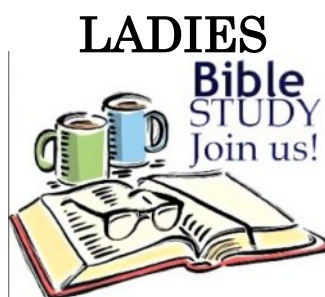
Our theme Scripture for 2020: "And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever." Daniel 12:3 (ESV)

ARP Women's Ministries is an organization which encourages, equips, and connects the community of ARP women to minister together for God's glory and purpose.

Our desire is that all women in the ARP Church will: Know Jesus Intimately, Love Jesus Faithfully, and Serve Jesus Fruitfully.

*The Morning Circle will meet on **Tuesday, August 4** at 10 AM in the Carson Room for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. Marcia Cole will be leading the 2020 Bible study on Daniel. In preparation for the study please read Daniel 6, Daniel in the Lions' Den. There will be no refreshments served at the meeting.*

Are you free on the first Tuesday of the month? The Morning Circle is always open for new members or visitors, contact Julia Rikard for further information.



Fellowship, Study, and Prayer

Mondays 7 - 9 pm

Fellowship Hall

If you are interested in the study, please contact either
 Marci Cole, tyb [REDACTED] OR
 Kristy Jennings, a [REDACTED] 298

ALL LADIES ARE WELCOME!!!!

Manna House Food Pantry Cereal and Grits



The Manna House box is in the Main Street vestibule to receive donations.

Our Church will be providing volunteers on Tuesday, August 11 and Thursday, August 13. Due to Covid-19 we have had to reduce our days of service to two (normally five) and are still having a difficult time getting volunteers to work. Most of the twenty-one churches that provide service have older volunteers who are unable to serve. If anyone has an hour on a Tuesday or Thursday and would be willing to volunteer, please contact Julia.

“... the Lord Jesus Himself said, ‘there is more happiness in giving than in receiving.’ Acts 20:35



Covered Dish Dinner

We will fellowship and share a meal together on Wednesday, August 12, 6:15 PM. The Church will provide the pizzas and drinks. Please bring a salad or a dessert.

On Friday mornings, 6:45 AM, a group of men gather at Doug Wicker's home, [REDACTED], for an encouraging time of food, fellowship, Bible Study, and prayer. Pastor Seth leads an interactive study of God's Word (currently 1 Peter).

Email Doug to be added to the weekly reminder.

**MEN'S
BIBLE
STUDY**
FRIDAY MORNINGS



MISSIONS FOCUS

Featured Missionaries – Drew & Lauren Goodman



Drew & Lauren serve as World Witness missionaries in Wales. The Goodmans serve at Christ Church Presbyterian in Barry, a revitalization church plant in partnership with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales, where Drew is the pastor, responsible for preaching, evangelism, outreach, and field development. Drew is an ordained minister in the ARP. A graduate of Moody Bible Institute and Reformed Theological Seminary, he is a current doctoral student at Westminster Theological Seminary. Lauren is a graduate of Belhaven College in Jackson, MS, and received her master's degree from UNC-Greensboro. Their home church is Ballantyne ARP in Charlotte, NC. The Goodmans have four children (Peter, Timothy, Luke, and Geneva).

Drew is an ordained minister in the ARP. A graduate of Moody Bible Institute and Reformed Theological Seminary, he is a current doctoral student at Westminster Theological Seminary. Lauren is a graduate of Belhaven College in Jackson, MS, and received her master's degree from UNC-Greensboro. Their home church is Ballantyne ARP in Charlotte, NC. The Goodmans have four children (Peter, Timothy, Luke, and Geneva).

The Goodmans have been home for furlough since June. They will be with us on **Sunday, August 23**, when Drew will delivered the sermon and share about their ministry during the fellowship meal following the worship service. Please join us for this wonderful opportunity to learn more about God's Kingdom expansion in the United Kingdom.

In their own words . . .

(From their May update while in Wales)

Churches in Britain face new challenges and opportunities. At Christ Church Presbyterian, we meet online for worship and prayer on Sunday and midweek. We send out a weekly ministry letter in the post, are in regular contact with members, and are also using the time to make progress on the next phase of facility development.

When vulnerable people began to self-isolate, we distributed leaflets to 2,000 households, offering support and advertising our online ministry. We've made several new friends by shopping for groceries or picking up medications. New friends receive our weekly ministry letter. Many others are "friends from a distance," as they explore ministry online.

ARP Church of Newberry

1701 Main Street
Newberry, SC 29108

We're on the web
NewberryARP.org

Flowers for August

- 2 - Communion
- 9 - Dottie Price & Carolyn Fulmer
- 16 - Judy Harmon
- 23 - Doris Singley
- 30 - Vernetha Renwick

Ushers for August

- 2 - Jason McCoy, Caleb Jennings
- 9 - Noah Yi, Andre Jennings
- 16 - Ben White, Herb Seigler
- 23 - Chip Porth, Michael Jennings
- 30 - Keith Avery, Doug Wicker