

# Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Newberry

1701 Main Street, Newberry, SC 29108

September 2021

## Shut-In of the Month

Richard Lominick  
 [REDACTED]  
 Newberry, SC  
 29108

## Prayer List

David Bunn (milt.); Mark McGuffee, Vernetha Renwick, Richard Lominick, James Hill, Doris Singley, Dottie Price

## Ministry Schedule

### Sunday

**9:45 am**

Sunday School

**10:25 am**

Cong. Assembly  
 (2nd & 4th  
 Sundays)

**10:55 am**

Worship

### Wednesday

**6:15 pm**

Youth

**6:30 pm**

Bible Study/  
 Prayer

## Update from the Session

Below is a summary of the actions taken by the Session in August:

1. The July Financial Report was received as information. The July Session minutes were approved.
2. The shepherding concerns of the congregation were shared and discussed.
3. A letter to members who have been inactive with the church for over a year will be mailed in September to encourage responsible membership.
4. The plans for a new church sign on Main St. are being formulated.
5. The September stated Session meeting is scheduled for the 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 PM.

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



## PRAYER CHAIN

If you have a prayer request, please email, text, or call **Marc Faulkenberry** or **Pastor Seth**, and it will be distributed via email.

prayers4newberry@gmail.com

[REDACTED] (cell)

sethyi1969@gmail.com

[REDACTED] (cell)

## New Preaching Series

On September 12, Pastor Seth will begin preaching through *Galatians*. Pray that we become more rooted in the Gospel and that our lives grow in its grace.

## Sunday School this Fall

Starting September 5, the following classes will meet.

- **Friendship:** Room behind the sanctuary taught by Doug Wicker, Andre Jennings, and Pastor Seth using the ARP Quarterly (*Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*).
- **Berean:** Conference Room in the Church Office taught by Marc Faulkenberry, *Matthew 13*.
- **Youth:** Youth Room taught by Herb Seigler, *Romans*.
- **Primary:** Room upstairs in the Grier Bld. taught by Andre Jennings, Children's Catechism.

## FINANCIAL DATA as of August 22, 2021

Budget Receipts \$135,946.97  
 Budget Needs \$113,533.82

### Valuing Church Membership

What does it mean to be a “member” of a church? Is there any difference between church membership and membership in any other organization? Is church membership necessary? These are important questions for every Christian to consider and to understand the implications that these answers have on their lives.

In the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church each congregation (local church) and Session (the board of ruling elders moderated by the pastor) are governed by the Standards (our constitution comprised of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Form of Government, Directory of Public Worship, Book of Discipline). In particular, the Form of Government (FOG) functions as the by-laws by which the church’s actions are ordered. The Session is obligated by virtue of the oath that they have vowed to uphold and act according to the FOG (along with the rest of the Standards).

Furthermore, anyone who wants to join and be a member of an ARP congregation (as well as those who are already members) is required to affirm their acceptance of the Standards and seek to abide by them:

FOG 4.5.A.: (6) *Do you accept that the doctrines and principles of the Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church are founded upon the Scriptures?* (7) *In loving obedience, do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of this church, promising to seek the peace, purity, and prosperity of this congregation as long as you are a member of it?*

These two questions relate particularly with the definition and function of a church member. It would be helpful for us to consider how these questions apply to what is happening in our world today and the challenges that the church is being confronted with in our anti-Christian culture.

Gone are the days in which the church holds a place of respect and prominence in our world, as we witnessed last year during the “pandemic shut-down.” We learned that the church is viewed by the civil authority as being no more “essential” than hair saloons or restaurants. In turn, church members were forced to evaluate and respond according to their convictions. Sadly, recent studies reveal that in-person (corporate) attendance is 36% of what it was pre-COVID (cited in <https://careynieuwhof.com/3-statistics-that-show-how-quickly-radically-and-permanently-church-is-changing-in-2020/>). Even if the percentage is better now, the current trend of rising government restrictions and ongoing variant transmission will likely lower attendance again. For those who do not have a clear, biblical understanding and conviction about church membership, corporate worship will be an inevitable casualty.

By way of reminder and encouragement, here is what our FOG (4.4) states specifically regarding the church member’s responsibility as it pertains to corporate worship:

*A. Make diligent use of the means of grace.* The preaching of the Word, the Sacraments, and prayer (WSC Q. 88) are key elements to corporate worship and are available each Lord’s Day. These graces cannot be duplicated in private. It is to your own spiritual demise and deprivation that you forsake the exercise of these means of grace.

*B. Share faithfully in the worship and service of the Church.* Participating in corporate worship is a visible expression of your faith in Christ. Indeed, worshipping God is not limited to corporate worship but it must *include* it. Corporate worship is vital to what it means to be a Christian and how your faith is made public. All throughout history, Christians have risked their lives to gather with other believers to worship God. It appears that that privilege and responsibility will be more and more costly in our lives.

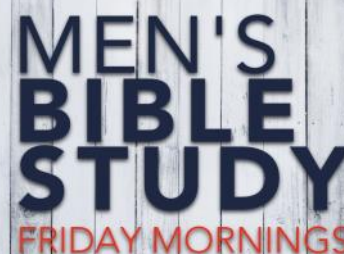
*C. Give of their substance as the Lord may prosper them.* I personally do not know nor want to know how much each member gives or how they give (some may still be mailing their giving to the church), but each week in corporate worship, we are given the opportunity to respond to God’s grace by presenting our tithes and offerings. This expression of worship is not a “fee” or “due” for being a church member but an act of biblical stewardship. We give out of the overflow of our hearts in joyful adoration for the eternal gift of God to us in His Son.

*E. Continue in the peace and fellowship of the people of God.* The spiritual relationship that is envisioned in this statement is nearly impossible apart from personal gatherings and interactions. As human beings created in the image of God, we need to be *with* one another and share *in* one another’s lives. This normally happens in each other’s presence. Coming together as the people of God is an expression of membership in the body of Christ and of this congregation.

Your Session is charged with the spiritual care and nurture of this flock. We would be negligent to you and unfaithful to God if we did not promote the value of church membership. We will have to stand before God on judgement day and give an account of our shepherding of your souls. Pray that we are grace by the Holy Spirit to fulfill our callings with joy and faith.

Pastor Seth

On Friday mornings, 6:45 AM, a group of men gather at Doug Wicker's home, [REDACTED] Dr., for an encouraging time of food, fellowship, Bible Study, and prayer. Pastor Seth leads an interactive study of God's Word (currently *Jeremiah*). Email Doug to be added to the weekly reminder.



MEN'S  
BIBLE  
STUDY  
FRIDAY MORNINGS

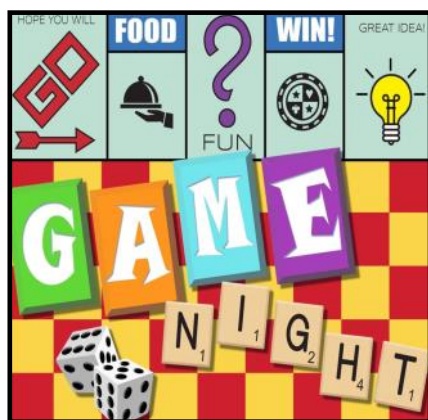


SEPTEMBER 12

*All singles and widows are invited to share in this monthly gathering of delightful fellowship and delicious food following the worship service at the Pastor's home.*

### SUNDAY MORNING CONGREGATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Everyone is invited to gather in the Fellowship Hall on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month from 10:25 to 10:50 AM to nurture *koinonia* with one another. Drinks and refreshments will be provided. Prayer requests will also be shared.



### FAMILY GAME NIGHT

Gather with your church family on September 24, 6:30 PM, in the Fellowship Hall, for a joyful time of fellowship and outreach. Bring your favorite games and an appetizer to share. Please invite others who may enjoy the fun!

## Women's Ministry

Our theme Scripture for 2021: "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12 (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, September 7** at 10 AM in the Carson Room for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. Our Bible Study will be on the parable "Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:21-35) and "The Lost Sheep and Lost Coin" (Luke 15:1-10).*

*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.*

**Thank you to all who attended the Jubilee Birthday Ice Cream Social. We received \$810 for the support of our missionaries, Sheila Osborne and Rebekah Carson.**

### Living Hope Foundation Food Pantry

There is a box in the Main Street vestibule to collect non-perishable food donations.



Living Hope Foundation focuses on the needs of our community in the areas of hunger, counseling, youth education, mentoring, health awareness, computer, and literacy skills. Their mission is "to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout our community - through our time, finances, product and lives. To be good stewards of all that God has given us, and to serve our fellow man faithfully using Christ as our example."

## What On Earth Is God Doing?

By Tat Stewart (Retired and Volunteer WW Missionary in Persian Ministry)



The tragic events that have unfolded in Afghanistan have been witnessed by the whole world, and has raised questions on multiple levels. One thing is clear: this is a humanitarian disaster which will have repercussions for years to come. It is not my purpose in this short article to address this issue from either a political or humanitarian perspective, but to try to answer the question of What on earth is God doing? This is a dilemma we face as the church of Jesus Christ: how to understand these events in light of God's Word and our understanding of who He is and what He is doing.

As I watched what was taking in place in Afghanistan, I was reminded of similar events that took place forty years ago in Iran. Patty, our two children, and I were living in Iran during the Islamic takeover. I was pastor of the Community Church of Tehran and working with the youth of the Evangelical Church of Iran at the time the American hostages were taken on November 4, 1979. Looking back through the lens of forty years of history, are there any lessons we can learn that might comfort us and guide us now as we deal with what is happening in Afghanistan?

As I sat with church leaders back then, there was a permeating fear that with the advent of the Islamic Republic of Iran would come the end of Christianity. They knew Islam well, as many of them had been former Muslims. But that is not what happened. Today in Iran, Christianity is growing faster than in any other country on earth, and has been identified as the most mature Muslim-background Church in the world. How could that be?

The first and most important reason is that we serve a sovereign God. "The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all" (Psalm 103:19). God has given all authority to His Son Jesus: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18). What happened in Iran was God's way of disrobing the true nature of Islam for millions of Iranians and to prove to the world that the gates of Hell could not prevail against His church. Yes, the people of Iran suffered greatly at the hands of the Islamic regime. The Christians suffered too -- pastors were martyred, the church went underground, and many fled the country. If we are students of the Bible, we are not unaware that Jesus taught us to expect suffering for His sake. We, of all people, must understand that God has chosen to use trouble as a means to advance His kingdom. Sometimes that trouble is the result of disobedience, as we see in Acts 8 where God allowed persecution to come to the church in order for the disciples to scatter and fulfill the Great Commission. The believers in Afghanistan are facing unbelievable hard times. Some of them have already become martyrs for the sake of our Lord Jesus, and others are facing persecution; but we must set our faces toward Jesus and trust His faithfulness.

Not only must we embrace the Biblical truth that God will be advancing His kingdom in Afghanistan in ways we can't even imagine right now but we must also keep our eyes open for the ways God's glory will shine through for all the world to see. For you see, God reveals His glory in the midst of suffering. His character and power shine through. "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; when you walk through the fire you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze, for I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your savior." (Isaiah 43:2-3)

Lastly, suffering purifies the church; it weeds out those who are not true followers. It emboldens true believers, as they find themselves on their knees day and night. It brings unity among those who are living in the fire as it did in Iran; for we saw, for the first time, Christians put aside their differences and began to gather together for times of prayer. It also brings unity with the global Church, as we are currently witnessing, as special prayer meetings are cropping up all over the world for Afghanistan. Just as Isaiah wrote in the above passage, God is with us and He faithfully shows up in miraculous ways in times of persecution. Go back and read the Book of Daniel. Listen to believers from Iran tell you about the dreams they have had of Jesus and the protections He has provided. One of my friends spent several weeks in prison in Iran because he was witnessing to Muslims and got caught. He wrote that those days in prison were the best days of his life. I knew it was not because the food was so great. No, he told me that he had never had such a sweet sense of the presence of Jesus. Yes, pray for our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan that they, too, will experience the sweet presence of Jesus and His protection. God's glory also shines through the transformation that suffering brings. In Iran, drug addicts are coming to Christ, Muslim clerics are coming to Christ, and God is radically changing people as He takes them through the fire.

I see it. I see what God is doing and I want to be apart of it. I hope you do, too. Pray earnestly, give financially to ministries that will glorify God, and open your heart to Afghan refugees when they come to your town.

# ARP Church of Newberry

1701 Main Street  
Newberry, SC 29108

We're on the web  
[NewberryARP.org](http://NewberryARP.org)

## Flowers for September

5 - Norman Bunn

12 - Shirley Mohler

19 - Catherine Faulkenberry

26 - TBA

## Ushers for September

5 - Keith Avery, Andre Jennings

12 - Cecil McRacken, Herb Seigler

19 - Chip Porth, Michael Jennings

26 - Caleb Jennings, Marc Faulkenberry