

Regular Sunday Morning Schedule to Resume on Easter, April 4
Worship at 8:00 & 10:30 am
Sunday School at 9:15 am
Regular Wednesday Night Schedule to Resume on April 14

The Pastor's Pen

We looked at an unusual description of suffering last Sunday when Paul referred to it as a privilege or gift "granted" by God: *For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake* (v.29). New Testament commentator Frank Thielman helps us avoid the confusion and misunderstanding that has led some Christians to wrongfully interpret the idea of suffering as a gift:

"Paul's claim that suffering is a gift can easily be misunderstood to mean that suffering itself is good. A historically tragic misinterpretation of Paul's discussion of suffering here and elsewhere in his letters has led some Christians to seek suffering or to inflict it upon themselves, under the impression that suffering itself somehow purifies them of sin or is for other reasons pleasing to God. It has led others to speak of the value of suffering to those in pain in a glib way that only increases the hurt. It has sometimes caused those who suffer to view God as a cruel tyrant, one who gives gifts that nobody wants.

"When Paul speaks of suffering as a gift, however, he does not mean that God is its author. The . . . pagans of Philippi who persecuted their newly converted neighbors [members of the Philippian church] were sinning, and God is not the author of sin. These pagan persecutors, out of their own fallen will, chose to make the fledgling church in their midst suffer. The suffering was their fault, not God's, and God justly held them responsible for it. But Paul can describe this

(Continued Inside)

First Focus

A Weekly Newsletter for the Family and Friends of Pickens First Baptist

All Church Members.....	Ministers
Fred Stone (859-5853).....	Senior Pastor
Bryan Hester (704-4802).....	Worship & Associate Pastor
Jeff Rafferty (607-8306).....	Discipleship & Missions Pastor
Mike Sterlachini (395-5880).....	Student & Family Pastor
Jennifer Hendrix (449-5381).....	Preschool Director
Katie Freeman.....	Financial Secretary
Tricia McJunkin.....	Church Secretary

Church Phone: 864-878-6564

Website: www.fbcpickens.org

Office Hours: 8:30 AM – 5 PM, Monday – Thursday

8:30 AM – 12:30 PM, Friday

The Pastor's Pen Continued

suffering as a gift from God because God in his sovereignty used this suffering to serve his own good purposes. In the words of Joseph to his brothers, *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives* (Gen. 50:20). In some mysterious way, unfathomable for finite and fallen human minds, Joseph's brothers did evil, but that evil did not lie outside the sovereign rule of God—God 'intended' it in order to bring good results."

Paul describes how God sovereignly uses all things, including suffering, to accomplish good in the lives of His people: *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* (Rom. 8:28)

As Dr. Thielman says, suffering is not one of God's good gifts that we should ever seek. But we must never forget that God sometimes uses suffering to bring about good results in our lives to:

- Develop perseverance, character, and hope in us (Rom. 5:1-5)
- Discipline us for our good (Heb. 12:5-11)
- Teach us compassion and empathy for others (2 Cor. 1:3-7)
- Prove the genuineness of our faith (1 Pet.1:6-7)
- Conform us to the likeness of Jesus (Rom.8:28-29).
- Result in glory and honor to Jesus when He returns (1 Pet.1:7)

Discipleship and Missions from Jeff

The logo for RightNow Media, featuring the word "rightnow" in a lowercase, sans-serif font with a blue-to-orange gradient, followed by the word "MEDIA" in a smaller, uppercase, sans-serif font.

Missing the Bible Study and Fellowship of Sunday School?

Certainly, we pray that we will be able to get back to in-person Sunday School as soon as possible, but until then do not forget about the wonderful resource of RightNow Media that you have available. You can use one of the hundreds of bible studies for personal study, family bible study, or even in small groups. There are also conferences available, as well as youth and children's content. So, until we are able to meet again in-person, don't allow yourself to miss out on some wonderful bible teaching from leaders like Tony Evans, Francis Chan, Matt Chandler, and many others. If you do not already have access to RightNow Media, please simply e-mail Jeff@fbcpickens.org and we will be happy to send you an invitation to get started.

Bible Training Center for Pastors and Church Leaders

We have started two BTCP courses (via Zoom) for Pastor and church leaders in Peru, as well as, leading a bible study on Friday nights. We have more than 100 participants in the Bible Training Courses, and approximately 50 in the bible study. If you would like to pray for one or two of the Peruvian church leaders, please e-mail Jeff at Jeff@fbcpickens.org and we will send you the name of a pastor or church leader for you to keep in prayer. If you would like to receive a Zoom invitation to simply sit in on one of our studies, please let us know and we will be glad to send you a link.

Released Time

Pickens County Christian Learning Center (www.pcreleasedtime.com) continues to teach middle school age children the bible every school day through our Released Time program. This year has definitely been a challenging year with Covid, but we continue to see the lives of our students changed by the Word of God! Our class sizes have been kept lower than normal due to Social Distancing, however we have students in Pickens Middle school who come to our building every school day. Please keep this ministry in your prayers, and if you would like to pray for one of the students, please contact Jeff at Jeff@fbcpickens.org, and he will be glad to send you the first name of a student to lift up daily to the Lord in prayer.

PRESCHOOL NEWS From Jennifer



Nursery Workers Needed

Nursery Workers for 2021

We need your help! If you would like to volunteer on a rotation schedule to work with our preschoolers (birth through kindergarten) during the 10:30 a.m. service, please let me know. You may call or text me at 864-449-5381 or email me at jennifer@fbcpickens.org. All volunteers must have a background check completed through the church and have been a member of our church for at least 6 months.

Preschool Worship Volunteers, 10:30 a.m. Service

February 21: Amy, Sophie, & Sadie Sawyer and Philip & Cheryl Aguero

February 28: Loree, Mallie, & Morgan Couch and Judy Edwards & Katie Shuman

Safety Team Rotation Assignment

The Month Of February

7th - Team B

14th - Team C

21th - Team D

28th - Team A

We have an opportunity to join David Platt and the Secret Church on April 23, 2021!

Beginning at 7 pm, David Platt will lead a virtual Bible study titled "The Great Imbalance." "Secret Church 21 is designed to be a ground-breaking journey through God's Word and around the world that leads to a tectonic shift in the way you view your life, your family, and God's design for the church. Your eyes will be open not only to a great imbalance that is affecting countless people for eternity, but also to the bold opportunity you have to change it with your time on this earth."

Tickets are \$10 which includes the live stream and the study book.

If you are interested in attending, please contact

Donivan Edwards: dedwards@swu.edu 864-650-1496 or

Judy Edwards: JudithEdwards@pickens.k12.sc.us 864-915-3351



Meals on Wheels

The Pickens area Meals on Wheels is in need of a few drivers for Tuesdays, and a few Wednesdays & Thursdays each month. Drivers can volunteer one day a month, or volunteer every week. Routes usually consist of 10 stops each and takes between an hour and 1 ½ hours. Couples can deliver meals together. Safety measures are in place regarding COVID. If interested, please contact Marsha Robertson at 864-855-3770.

IN BRIEF

Thank you, Church Family, for the memorial given in memory of my brother, Oliver Nealy.

Dianne Nealy and I would both like to thank you for your prayers for our family during this time.

Sadie Lee

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for the memorial you made to the building fund in mom's honor. We appreciate you honoring her in this way.

*With gratitude,
Dora Lark's Family*

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for the memorial you placed in the building fund in memory of our mother, Annie Cox. Thank you also for all the phone calls, cards, and prayers.

*Love in Christ,
Lou Watson
Pat Sanders
Lynda Payne
and Family*



Please Remember To Pray For Our Homebound

Please notify the church office if you or a family member would like to be added to our homebound or in-care facility lists.



Disaster Relief Training

There will be a **Disaster Relief** training session at Brushy Creek Baptist Church in Easley on April 17. Space will be limited so if you need your credentials updated, you might want to register early. This is about as close to home as DR training is going to get.

If you know anyone that is interested in becoming a volunteer please pass this on to them.

For more information go to the **SCBC** website at scbaptist.org for more information and to register.

Pickens First Baptist Church Schedule

Sunday, February 21

9:00 a.m. - 1st Worship Service

10:30 a.m. - 2nd Worship Service

FACTS & FIGURES

February 14, 2021

Building Fund: \$562,154.61

Offering - \$18,535.67

Offering to Date - \$125,580.67

Goal to Date - \$152,859.42

To Give Online:

1. Go to www.fbcpickens.org
2. Click on the "MyPFBC" Icon
3. Click on "Give"
4. Choose "Create an Account" or "Give Without A Login" and follow the directions

If you have any questions, you may call Katie in the church office at 878-6564.



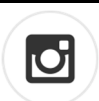

Year-End Contribution Statements

If you have a MyPFBC account, your 2020 contribution statement is now available to view/print. To print your contribution statement, please do the following:

- Log-in to your account
- Select the *Giving History* tab
- Click the gray *PDF Tax Statement* button

Please call or email Katie if you have any questions or if you would like your statement mailed, emailed, or printed for pick-up. 878-6564 / katie@fbcpickens.org

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Welcome to Pickens First Baptist Church

February 21, 2021

Opening Song

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Opening Scripture

Lamentations 3

22

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;

23

they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

24

“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul,
“therefore I will hope in him.”

Congregational Songs

The Reason

His Mercy Is More

Welcome and Prayer

Message In Song *Grace Flows Down*.....Bryan and Angie Hester

Message From God's Word.....Pastor Fred Stone

Song Of Commitment

We Will Glorify

Closing Prayer

9:00 a.m. - David Harper

10:30 a.m. - Davey Hiott

Closing Song

There's Something About That Name

Pickens First Baptist Church exists to be a Worshiping, Evangelizing, Learning, and Loving (W.E.L.L.) family of faith to the glory of God. (Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Cor. 10:31).

Online Worship Service Available

* On YouTube: On your smart TV, smartphone, iPad, or computer go to:

fbcpickens.org/youtube

* On Pickens FBC Website: On your smartphone, iPad, or computer,

go to: www.fbcpickens.org